

**FROM TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECTIVE VISION TO POLITICAL
IDEALISM: PANORAMAS IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICAN LITERATURE**

A Dissertation

by

JOON HYUNG PARK

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2012

Major Subject: English

From Transcendental Subjective Vision to Political Idealism: Panoramas in Antebellum

American Literature

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ABSTRACT

From Transcendental Subjective Vision to Political Idealism: Panoramas in Antebellum

American Literature. (August 2012)

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This dissertation explores the importance of the panorama for American Renaissance writers' participation in ideological formations in the antebellum period. I analyze how Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Wells Brown, Henry Box Brown, and Harriet Beecher Stowe use the panorama as a metaphorical site to contest their different positions on epistemological and sociopolitical agendas such as transcendentalism, masculinist expansionism, and radical abolitionism.

Emerson uses the panorama as a key metaphor to underpin his transcendental idealism and situate it in contemporary debates on vision, gender, and race. Connecting the panorama with optical theories on light and color, Emerson appropriates them to theorize his transcendental optics and makes a hierarchical distinction between light/transparency/panorama as metaphors for spirit, masculinity, and race-neutral man versus color/opacity/myopic vision for body, femininity, and racial-colored skin. In his

paeon to the moving panorama, Thoreau expresses his desire for Emersonian correspondence between nature and the spirit through transcendental panoramic vision. However, Thoreau's esteem for nature's materiality causes his panoramic vision to be corporeal and empirical in its deviation from the decorporealized vision in Emerson's notion of transparent eyeball. Hawthorne repudiates the Transcendentalists' and social reformers' totalizing and absolutist idealism through his critique of the panorama and the emphasis on opacity and ambiguity of the human mind and vision. Hawthorne reveals how the panorama satisfies the desire for visual and physical control over the rapidly expanding world and the fantasy of access to truth. Countering the dominant convention of the Mississippi panorama that objectifies slaves as a spectacle for romantic tourism, Box Brown and Wells Brown open up a new American subgenre of the moving panorama, the anti-slavery panorama. They reconstruct black masculinity by verbally and visually representing real-life stories of some male fugitive slaves and idealizing them as masculine heroes of the anti-slavery movement. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe criticizes how the favorable representation of slavery and the objectification of slaves in the Mississippi panorama and the picturesque help to construct her northern readers' uncompassionate and hard-hearted attitudes toward the cruel realities of slavery and presents Tom's sympathetic and humanized "eyes" as an alternative vision.

DEDICATION

To Dana, Dylan, and Chan Hee

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It would not have been possible to complete this dissertation without the support and help of my colleagues, family, and friends.

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To my wife Chan Hee, I send my love and heartfelt thanks for having been many things to me for the past eight years in Texas—best friend, colleague, writing partner, and wonderful mother to our two lovely children, Dana and Dylan. Thank you.

NOMENCLATURE

- CEC* *The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle*, ed. Joseph Slater
(New York: Columbia UP, 1964)
- CW* *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ronald A.
Bosco, Glen M. Johnson, and Joel Myerson (Cambridge: Belknap,
1971-)
- EL* *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Cambridge:
Harvard UP, 1959)
- J* *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson: With Annotations*, ed. Edward
W. Emerson and Waldo E. Forbes (Boston and New York:
Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909-1914)
- JMN* *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo
Emerson*, ed. William H. Gilman et al. (Cambridge: Harvard UP,
1960-82)
- JT* *The Journal of Henry D. Thoreau*, ed. Bradford Torrey and
Francis H. Allen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949)
- L* *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph L Rusk and
Eleanor M. Tilton (New York: Columbia UP, 1939-95)
- LL* *The Later Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1843-1871*, ed.
Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson (Athens and London: U of
Georgia P, 2001)

- UTC* Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- WT* *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau: Journal. Vol. 3, 1848-1851*,
ed. R. Sattelmeyer, M. R. Patterson, and W. Rossi (Princeton:
Princeton UP, 1990)

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE PANORAMA AND THE ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

The word “panorama” was coined in the late eighteenth century from the Greek words *pan* and *horama*, meaning “all-embracing view.” As a technical term, it first referred to a new combined form of painting and architecture,¹ later known as the circular or static panorama. Circular panoramas provide spectators with the illusory experience of viewing a landscape or cityscape from a bird’s-eye point of view by manipulating perspective, vanishing points, and horizon lines and faithfully reproducing the 360-degree view on a large canvas suspended on the inside wall of a rotunda. The inventor of the circular panorama was Irish artist Robert Barker, who began to exhibit his first panorama the *Panorama of Edinburgh* in 1787 and registered a patent the same year. The granting of a patent for Barker’s invention proved his contemporaries’ recognition of the panorama’s worth as a highly profitable piece of intellectual property, like James Watt’s steam engine.² The audience of circular panoramas was cross-class—including peasants, laborers, the bourgeoisie, and diplomats—and its popularity continued in Europe throughout the nineteenth century.³ The major functions of panoramas, whose common subject matter included landscape, historic sites, and military and biblical spectacles, extended beyond public entertainment and informal education. As a response to the nineteenth-century desire for control over a rapidly expanding world, the panorama was a commercial and political “propaganda machine”

This dissertation follows the style of the *Publications of Modern Language Association*.

for tourism, nationalism, and colonial and imperialistic policies.⁴

In contrast to the popularity of circular panoramas on the European continent, the nineteenth-century United States observed the phenomenal success of the moving panorama. Unlike the static panorama, which has a circular vista of 360 degrees, the moving panorama represents a stretch of landscape on a long strip of canvas, generally hundreds of feet to half a mile in length and eight to twelve feet high,⁵ which is scrolled and taken up between two large reels placed at the rear of the stage. The duration of a show was normally two hours and the price of admission was about 25 to 50 cents per person. Often accompanied by the lecture of a showman-narrator and orchestra or piano music, the exhibition simulated real-life travel through the landscape with a display of relevant artifacts. The moving panorama fever that swept the American public was at its peak from the late 1840s through the 1850s, when Mississippi panoramas were enormously successful.⁶ In the context of the mass entertainment business in the age of Barnum, the commercial success of the moving panorama as a combined form of art show and theatrical spectacle may have been impossible without its connection to mass tourism, which was instigated by the development of steam transportation as well as the growth of the middle class. In addition, moving panoramas played a significant role as documentaries that recorded historical and political events and, furthermore, as political propaganda that served specific historical and political ideologies—e.g. abolitionism and the Union cause during the Civil War.⁷

The nineteenth-century enthusiasm for the panorama in Europe and America has drawn considerable scholarly attention in the last two decades. In fields such as art

history, museum studies, visual culture studies, and American studies, scholars such as Stephen Oettermann, Bernard Comment, Ralph Hyde, Kevin J. Avery, and Angela Miller have presented extensive research on the panorama, including several book-length studies as well as half a dozen doctoral dissertations on the panorama in art and media studies. Among them, Oettermann's *Panorama: History of a Mass Medium* (1980; trans. 1997) is the most comprehensive study on the cultural and social history of the panorama. Oettermann characterizes the panorama as the first visual "mass medium" which served as the symbolic form for the "democratic perspective" of the rising middle class by liberating human vision from "the spirit of absolutist rule" in the monarchy, which was symbolized by a central perspective in the forms of feudal art such as Baroque theaters (31). While Baroque theaters excluded all but a single correct viewpoint which was reserved for the sovereign in the royal box, the circular panorama or the cyclorama not only created multiple perspectives⁸ but also provided sufficient room for a large number of spectators—up to 150 at the same time.⁹ In a discussion of the use of the panorama for the political and national ideology of nineteenth-century America, Avery defines nineteenth-century American panoramas as "movies for manifest destiny" and national expansionism. In his doctoral dissertation, "The Panorama and Its Manifestation in American Landscape Painting, 1795-1870," Avery rejects the tendency to dismiss or downplay the panorama as popular art which was once commercially successful but has been buried by history, and instead seeks to rediscover its significance in nineteenth-century American landscape painting. Avery examines the manifest influences of the panoramic arts on American landscape painters including

Thomas Cole, founder of the Hudson River School, especially in his narrative landscape series and second-generation artists such as Frederic Edwin Church and Albert Bierstadt through the creation of the explorer-artist persona and the popularization of the wide-angle format.

Contrary to growing scholarly attention to the panorama in other fields, however, scholarly research on the panorama in literary studies does not go beyond article-length studies that invariably pay attention to a particular individual writer's interest in, and direct and indirect references to, the panorama in his or her writings. As I will explore in the following chapters, however, in nineteenth-century America, the panorama became a 'way of seeing'¹⁰ and, at the same time, a 'way of representing' the external and internal world in both literary and pictorial forms. Many nineteenth-century American authors recognized the significance of the panorama not just as one of the most popular forms of contemporary art and show business but also as a visual and epistemological metaphor that they could use in their writings. In other words, they endowed the "panorama" with metaphorical meanings and sociopolitical implications.

Two previous studies have suggested ways in which the panorama informed nineteenth-century American literature. First, in *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875* (1993), Miller criticizes the nationalistic defensiveness toward American expansionism in the existing scholarship on American landscape paintings. As she sharply points out, not only has the scholarship accepted as unproblematic the association between American landscape and nationalist expansionism, but it has also neglected social and political tensions surrounding the

struggle for the imperialistic formation of the national landscape. Refuting this tendency, Miller carefully analyzes how the representation of the American landscape reflects the unresolved conflicts between contenders with different political and ideological positions.¹¹ Similarly, my focus on the panorama, one of the most popular forms of landscape painting in nineteenth-century America, reveals it as a contested site that reflects different positions and viewpoints on social, political, and historical issues. Second, Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer* (1990) provides a useful theoretical frame for understanding the epistemological trajectory of optical instruments in the context of the philosophical and scientific discourses on vision, spectatorship, and subjectivity in the nineteenth century. Crary argues that the invention of many optical instruments in the early nineteenth century, including the kaleidoscope (1815), the diorama (1820s), and the Faraday wheel (1831), changed the concepts of vision and the observer and engendered the collapse of the old model of vision and subjectivity. In this old model, many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers such as René Descartes (1596-1650), John Locke (1632–1704), Isaac Newton (1643-1727), and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) used the camera obscura as well as the Renaissance perspective¹² as a metaphor for the Cartesian subject,¹³ which was regarded as the center of the world.

What is the position of the panorama in Crary's theory on the paradigmatic shift from the old model of vision and subjectivity to the new model in the early nineteenth century? Should we categorize the panorama as part of the old model or the new? The panorama is often misunderstood as one of the early nineteenth-century optical

inventions that embodies Crary's new model of the observer,¹⁴ not only because the panorama was popular throughout the nineteenth century as a form of public entertainment but also because Crary, in *Techniques of the Observer*, which is often appreciated as the most influential and groundbreaking study on nineteenth-century vision and optical devices, seems to show an ambiguous attitude toward the classification of the panorama. On the one hand, he differentiates the circular or semicircular panorama's "ambulatory ubiquity" from the camera obscura's "localized point of view" (Crary 113). On the other hand, he emphasizes the difference between the panorama and the diorama, one of the early nineteenth-century optical devices for Crary's new model, in order to explain the changed position of the observer in the new model. As Crary points out, the diorama removed the observer's autonomy, which the panorama retained, by incorporating "an *immobile* observer into a mechanical apparatus and a subjection to a predesigned temporal unfolding of optical experience" (Italics original 112-13).¹⁵

In order to clarify the position of the panorama in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to understand the panorama's ambivalent aspects within the broader context of technological developments and their association with changes in the notions of vision and subjectivity in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Some existing studies tend to focus on the democratic, liberal, and revolutionary characteristics of the panorama as the first visual mass medium for the rising middle class and as a forerunner of modern cinema. For example, Oettermann argues that the panorama has a "distinct

break” with its precursors such as Baroque theater painting in its liberal and democratic force, which resisted the spirit of absolutist rule in the monarchy.

While acknowledging all these positive features, I wish to call more attention to the latent desire for absolutist and totalizing dominance embedded within the panorama, especially in its connection to the camera obscura. As theoretical groundwork for the connection between the panorama and the camera obscura, I draw upon Crary’s persuasive analysis of the camera obscura which functioned to form the four characteristics of vision and the observer: first, the individuation and autonomy of the observer; second, *askesis*, or the withdrawal of the observer from the world within isolated, enclosed confines in order to “regulate and purify one’s relation to the manifold contents of the now ‘exterior’ world”; third, the decorporealization of vision to “sunder the act of seeing from the physical body of the observer”; fourth, the authentication and legitimization of the monadic viewpoint of the observer (38-39). In the camera obscura, the individualized and isolated position of the decorporealized observer leads to his “stable and fixed relations” to the world “without sacrificing the vitality of its being” (Crary 14, 34).¹⁶

Given this analysis, I characterize the panorama in the nineteenth century as both the extension and the retro-extension of the camera obscura. Both the camera obscura and the panorama register the spectator’s desire for the orderly delineation of the world outside and the access to truth and knowledge. They provide the observer with an authoritative relation to the world, “the undermarked, undifferentiated expanse” of the seventeenth- and the eighteenth-century world in the camera obscura and to the

nineteenth-century world of “disconnection and anonymity” filled with “distant, unknown, and unreadable” crowd who “puts the spectator in dangerous contact with contamination and taint” in the panorama (Crary 34; Nord 2). The unlimited dominance over the world in the panorama not only extends the autonomous, dominating, isolated, and confined view in the camera obscura but also reflects contemporaries’ longing to return to the pre-camera-obscura mode of a divine and omniscient vision in the sixteenth century.

The notion of the panorama as the extension of a camera obscura view becomes more evident when we consider the difference between the panorama and the diorama. The diorama, invented by Louis J. M. Daguerre in the early 1820s, was one of the most popular optical instruments of those that were newly invented in the early nineteenth century. Paul Virilio’s description of Daguerre’s 1822 diorama states, “the viewer’s room was mobile and spun round like a one-man-operated merry-go-round. Everyone found themselves carried around past all the paintings on show without apparently having to move a muscle” (40). According to Crary, what is important about the influence of the diorama—and other new optical devices—on the changed notion of the observer and his subjectivity is that it causes the observer to fall from an autonomous, authoritative, and dominating position procured by the camera obscura and the panorama. The diorama, like other new optical inventions such as the phenakistiscope and the zootrope, “removed that autonomy from the observer” by making the spectator “a component” or “an element” of “a machine of wheels in motion” on “a circular platform that was slowly moved, permitting views of different scenes and shifting light

effects” (Crary 113). When the observer of the diorama fell from the all-observing but the unobserved subject to the observed object and when his corporeal body or organ such as an eye became “a subject of empirical research and observation” (Crary 112), it undermined the dominance and authority that the observer had had as a decorporealized being with an objective view of the world through the light of pure reason in the vanishing point of the camera obscura or as a detached and elevated being in the vantage point of the panorama.

One of the early-nineteenth-century writings demonstrating the association between the panorama and a camera obscura view is Pierce Egan’s best-seller book titled *Life in London* (1821). In Chapter 2, Egan introduces his readers to an exhibition of pictures representing the cityscape and life of London, which he calls “a *Camera Obscura* View of London” (Italics original 15). By positioning his readers as spectators of a panorama, Egan guarantees that they can take a panoramic view of the metropolis in “safety” because they obtain “invaluable advantages of seeing and not being seen” (15). In fact, to model a book as a panorama or a peepshow was not uncommon in the early nineteenth century.¹⁷ As one of the most popular British urban panoramists of his period,¹⁸ Egan is clearly aware that a detached and dominant viewpoint of the camera obscura is necessary for the panoramic mode of writing as well as panorama paintings.

In order to fully debunk the totalizing, dominating, and reactionary aspects of the panorama, I also define the panorama as a retro-extension of the camera obscura, that is, a nostalgic attempt to adapt the pre-camera obscura mode of a divine and omniscient vision in the sixteenth century within the sociopolitical context of the nineteenth century.

The panorama's "all-embracing view" is analogous to the pre-camera obscura mode—in Crary's terms, a "pre-Copernican, synoptic and totalizing" (52) framework of "a divine eye" (50) or "a bird's-eye view" (52)—in sixteenth-century topographical sketches such as an ichnographical bird's-eye view sketch of Venice titled *View of Venice* (ca. 1500) by Jacopo de' Barbari and a 360-degree panoramic sketch of London, *The Panorama of London circa 1544*, by Anthonis van den Wyngaerde, one of the most important topographical artists in sixteenth-century Europe.

In the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century world, which began to recognize the fundamental relativity of each viewpoint with the loss of a divine eye's absolute and omniscient point of view, the central concern for German idealists such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) in his theory of monads¹⁹ and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in his notion of subjective universality was to find a way to transcend an individual observer's limited viewpoint in order to meet the need for divine truth. By applying his theory of monads—which posits that "each monad had the capacity to reflect in itself the whole universe from its own finite viewpoint" (Crary 50)—to the camera obscura's localized viewpoint, Leibniz regarded a limited but monadic viewpoint of the camera obscura as a metaphor for the observer's most rational control over the increasingly fragmented and decentered world.²⁰ Ironically, the same need for regaining control over a rapidly disordered world in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries brought out the invention of, and the subsequent craze for, the panorama. Given the reverse parallelism between the panorama and its predecessor, the camera obscura, in terms of the epistemological shift surrounding their birth, it is no

exaggeration to argue that, despite its appeal to the spirit of democracy for the middle class, the panorama was a return to, or an adaptation of, the pre-Copernican mode of a divine bird's-eye view in a different context of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Recognizing the heterogeneous—both revolutionary and reactionary— aspects of the panorama, this dissertation seeks to explore the significance of the panorama for literary writers' participation in ideological formations in the antebellum period. Now almost forgotten or simply regarded as a forerunner of modern cinema, the panorama was the most popular optical recreation and one of the most powerful political propaganda machines in antebellum America. By focusing on the relation between the panorama and American Renaissance literature within the cultural and political contexts of antebellum America, I scrutinize the ways in which literary writers use the panorama as a metaphorical site to contest their different positions on epistemological and sociopolitical agendas such as self-reliant transcendentalism, masculinist expansionism, and radical abolitionism.

In chapter 2 “Subjective Vision and Nineteenth-century Optics: Emerson on Goethe, Kant, Newton, and the Panorama,” I demonstrate how Ralph Waldo Emerson uses the panorama as a key metaphor to underpin his transcendental idealism and situate it in contemporary debates on vision, gender, and race. Emerson connects the panorama with optical theories on light and color and appropriates them to theorize his transcendental optics on synthesizing unity and transparency of the human vision. Versed with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's then-recent optical theory—with its ideas

about physiological subjective vision, physiological colors, and the opacity of the human vision—that challenged the Kantian model of idealistic subjective vision and Isaac Newton’s theory of physical colors and colorless light, Emerson uses his critique of Goethe in order to express his pro-Newtonian and pro-Kantian positions on the human vision and mind and his valorization of the panorama. Emerson also employs optical metaphors in his transcendental philosophy in order to address socio-political issues such as gender, race, and anti-slavery. Emerson makes a hierarchical distinction between light/transparency/panorama as metaphors for spirit, masculinity, and race-neutral man versus color/opacity/myopic vision for body, femininity, and racial-colored skin.

In chapter 3 “Thoreau and Hawthorne on the Panorama and Emersonian Transcendental Idealism,” I briefly examine other American Renaissance writers who discern and criticize the panorama’s philosophical and sociopolitical implications with regard to selfhood, race, and gender, and then I focus on Henry David Thoreau and Nathaniel Hawthorne to explore how their responses to the panorama illuminate their different views on Emersonian transcendentalism. Thoreau reveals his desire for Emersonian correspondence between nature and the spirit through transcendental panoramic vision in his paean to the moving panorama in some journal entries and essays. At the same time, however, due to his esteem for nature’s materiality, Thoreau emphasizes the doubleness of the human vision by harmonizing the decorporealized and transcendental vision in Emerson’s Kantian idealism with the Lockean empiricist concept of physical vision. In contrast, Hawthorne, through his critique of the panorama and the camera obscura as well as his emphasis on opacity and ambiguity of the human

mind and vision, repudiates the Transcendentalists' and social reformers' totalizing and absolutist idealism and reveals how the panorama satisfies and reinforces the desire for visual and physical control over the rapidly expanding world and the fantasy of access to truth.

In chapter 4 "The Expansion of Masculinity: Mississippi Panoramas and Black Abolitionist Panoramas," I examine two American subgenres of the moving panorama, the Mississippi panorama and the anti-slavery panorama, and explore their different social and political implications for slavery and masculinity. Mississippi panoramas served to justify the imperialistic territorial aggrandizement of the nation and idealized the white panoramist as a national hero who created a national painting that was grand and large enough to represent the grandeur and extent of the nation's landscape. These moving panoramas often romanticized slavery and invalidated black masculinity in order to support white supremacy in the nation's expansion and progress. Countering the dominant convention of the Mississippi panorama, two black abolitionists transformed the popular genre of the moving panorama into anti-slavery propaganda in 1850. Henry Box Brown with his *Mirror of Slavery* and William Wells Brown with his *Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave* not only achieved black authorship through their multiple roles as producers, exhibitors, narrators, and performers in their panoramas, but they also reconstructed black masculinity. Especially, Wells Brown verbally and visually represented real-life stories of some male fugitive slaves and idealized them as masculine heroes of anti-slavery and as ideal black

patriarchs who courageously fought against armed slave hunters to protect their own and other fugitive families.

In chapter 5 “The Two Greatest Hits of Antebellum America: Moving Panoramas and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” I explore how multifaceted interactions between the two most popular cultural texts in nineteenth-century America, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and the moving panorama, reinforce or challenge the contemporary sociopolitical and cultural norms and attitudes toward slavery and gender. I divide their interactions into four chronological and logical stages. Concerning the pre-UTC influence of the moving panorama on Harriet Beecher Stowe, I identify her vision of a tortured slave, which was a source for Tom’s death scene in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), as an allusion to the moving panorama. I also suggest the *Panorama of Pilgrim’s Progress*, whose theme is religious and moralistic and whose artistic quality is exceptionally high, as a possible source of inspiration for Stowe’s novel. In the novel, through the allusions to the Mississippi panorama and the picturesque, Stowe criticizes how these visual conventions function *as* socially constructed ways of seeing that influence people to romanticize slavery and objectify slaves. Stowe also presents Tom’s “new eyes,” which are more sympathetic and humanized, as an alternative vision to these dominant visual conventions. In the post-UTC era of the nineteenth century, there were two different kinds of encounters between the moving panorama and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. “Tom plays” often incorporated Mississippi panoramas to reinforce their revision that reduced abolitionist statements and sympathized with pro-slavery sentiment. Contrastingly, Stowe’s novel engendered a new subgenre, the white abolitionist panorama: following

two anti-slavery panoramas by black abolitionists in 1850, at least six anti-slavery panoramas based on Stowe's novel were created by white abolitionist painters. These encounters also changed Stowe's attitude towards the panorama and theater in her later life and literature. In 1854, renouncing her earlier objection to plays, Stowe, for the first time in her life, attended the performance of a Tom play in Boston. In *The Minister's Wooing* (1859), Stowe suggests a possibility of constructing an alternative mode of panoramic vision for female subjectivity.

Notes

1. *Dictionary of Building Terms*, vol. III (Paris, 1881-2) defines “panorama” as “a building in which a painting referred to as a panorama is exhibited, that is to say painted on the inside wall of a rotunda, covered by a cupola or cone-shaped roof” (Comment 7).

2. See Oettermann 5.

3. According to the audience figures François Robichon worked out in *Le Mouvement social*, between 1800 and 1820, there were about 30,000 to 50,000 visitors a year; after that to 1860, the number of the audience dropped to 15,000 annually; since then, the numbers gradually rose up to 200,000 between 1872 and 1885 (Comment 115).

4. Comment 8.

5. See Miller, “The Panorama” 39; Moldenhauer 229.

6. Concerning the popularity of Mississippi panoramas, see pp. 112-13 in chapter 4.

7. As Bernard Comment points out, the static panorama’s lack of temporality can be problematic, especially when it represents a battle, since “a painter has to choose from a sequence of events and favour a specific moment” (107).

8. See Oettermann 31.

9. See also Dinkla 28-30.

10. In his book with the same title, John Berger uses the term “ways of seeing” to refer to his notion of vision as a social construction, convention, and system. Jonathan

Crary also defines an observer as “one who sees within a prescribed set of possibilities, one who is embedded in a system of conventions and limitations” (6). In the same way, Oettermann argues that the panorama was a socially constructed form of view and representation for the bourgeois class by refuting the notion of the panorama as a “natural” form, which reflects the impression that “the circular painting took its name from the natural phenomenon and not the reverse” and that “the panorama as an art form is an imitation of the panoramas that have existed as natural formations from time immemorial” not a “natural” (7).

11. See Miller, *The Empire of the Eye* 1-4.

12. Crary seeks to differentiate the camera obscura from linear perspective by stressing that the camera obscura “defines the position of an interiorized observer to an exterior world, not just to a two dimensional representation, as is the case with perspective” (34). However, as, in his four lectures entitled “Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*,” Jacques Lacan uses linear perspective to illustrate his eye-gaze relationship between the subject and the other, which subverts the Cartesian subject’s hegemony (65-119), linear perspective as well as the camera obscura can be read as a philosophical metaphor for subjectivity and the observing subject’s relationship to the world.

13. I use the term “subject” here in the sense that W. J. T. Mitchell uses in *Picture Theory*, in which he writes, “the ‘subject’ is paradigmatically a *spectator*, the ‘object’ a visual image. Vision, space, world-pictures, and art-pictures all weave together as a grand tapestry of ‘symbolic forms’ that synthesize the *kunstwollen* of each historical period” (18-19). In the same way, in his discussion about the subjectivity of the observer,

Crary associates the notion of the subject with the observer—that is, “the subject-as-observer” (70).

14. For example, see Dora 293-94; Garu 54.

15. Concerning the autonomy of the observer in the circular or semicircular panorama, Crary asserts, “[o]ne was compelled at the least to turn one’s head (and eyes) to see the entire work” (113).

16. Based on Laura Mulvey’s notion of the male gaze, I intentionally use the male pronoun to refer to the observer here and later in the chapter. As Mulvey notes that phallogentrism presumes the split between the man as a bearer of the active look and the woman as a passive image (366), the hierarchical order of western metaphysics has traditionally ascribed to the man the superior position as the observing subject.

17. A good example is Mary R. Stockdale’s *The Panorama of Youth* in 1816. Also, in the 1840s and 1850s, as David Seed indicates, “there were a series of illustrated children’s gift books that were modeled as a panorama or peepshow” (15).

18. See Brand 7.

19. Although Crary has never mentioned its connection with the panorama, his reading of Leibniz about a seventeenth-century need for the shift from the pre-Copernican mode of a divine vision’s bird’s-eye view to the camera obscura’s localized point of view is noteworthy. Leibniz was clearly aware of the epistemological gap between the pre-Copernican divine vision and the localized point of view in the camera obscura and Renaissance perspective when he said, “The difference between the appearance of a body for us and for God is the difference between scenography and

ichnography” (qtd. in Crary 50) that is, as Crary annotates, between “perspective and a bird’s-eye view” (51).

20. As Crary points out, “The conceptual structure of the camera obscura is a parallel reconciliation of a limited (or monadic) viewpoint and, at the same time, necessary truth” (50).

2. SUBJECTIVE VISION AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY OPTICS: EMERSON ON GOETHE, KANT, NEWTON, AND THE PANORAMA

Ralph Waldo Emerson's enthusiasm for natural science continued throughout his career as a writer and lecturer. After he resigned as junior pastor of Boston's Second Church in 1832 and declared himself to be a "naturalist" in an 1833 journal entry (*J*, 3:163),¹ the first four lectures of Emerson's new career as a lecturer in 1833-34 were on science.² Although "Humanity of Science," delivered in 1836, was his last science lecture, Emerson's letters, journals, lectures, and biographies record his lifelong interest in natural science. In his 1867 Phi Beta Kappa address titled "Progress of Culture," Emerson presents optics as a branch of contemporary natural science that he eulogizes as "a controlling influence of the times" (*CW*, 3:110). With his esteem for optics, Emerson often drew metaphors for his transcendental idealism from optical theories as well as from popular experiments and exhibitions of optical instruments, such as the daguerreotype, the camera obscura, the microscope, the telescope, the camera lucida, and the panorama.³

In *American Renaissance* (1941), F. O. Matthiessen emphasized Emerson's preoccupation with visual sense and its significance for Emerson's "optative mood."⁴ Since then, a goodly number of studies have analyzed the eye and vision as central metaphors in Emerson's romantic and transcendentalist notions of nature, self, and aesthetics. Given this emphasis, it is surprising that, in spite of recent Emerson scholarship's increasing interest in the subject of Emerson and natural science,⁵ scant

scholarly attention has been paid to the influence of nineteenth-century optics on Emerson's work. Most studies of Emerson's visual imagery focus on its metaphoric power without examining its scientific basis in his enthusiasm for both theoretical and popular optics.

The first study on Emerson and optics was Valerie Sue Neal's 1979 Ph.D. dissertation titled "Transcendental Optics: Science, Vision, and Imagination in the Works of Emerson and Thoreau." Neal provides an almost complete list of Emerson's numerous references to contemporary optical theories, experiments, and instruments in his lectures, journal entries, and letters. For about three decades, the topic has been ignored by Emerson scholars until the publication of Sean Ross Meehan's 2008 book, *Mediating American Autobiography: Photography in Emerson, Thoreau, Douglass, and Whitman*. Meehan's work investigates the correspondence between the emerging technology of photography and American autobiography during the period of the American Renaissance. In Chapter 2, titled "Like Iodine to Light: Emerson's Photographic Thinking," Meehan analyzes the photographic implications of Emerson's autobiographic expression in *Representative Men* (1850).

While I share Neal's and Meehan's interest in the influence of optical technology on Emerson's thinking and writing, I suggest that the significance of Emerson's visual imagery demands our further exploration within the context of both theoretical and popular optics in the nineteenth century. Using as springboard the two contrasting approaches in these two previous studies—Neal's comprehensive and descriptive cataloguing of Emerson's references to optics and Meehan's selective focus on and

prescriptive analysis⁶ of the link between an optical instrument (photography) and a literary genre (autobiography)—, I seek to decode from Emerson's visual metaphors and references to optics and optical recreations his position on vital issues in nineteenth-century optics, such as light, color, the eye as a physiological organ, and the observer's subjectivity and vision.

Concerning one of Emerson's most well-known visual metaphors, transparent eyeball vision, existing studies identify as sources of inspiration the dialectic of self and nature/universe in Romantic theory as well as eastern philosophy, especially the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.⁷ Based on an assumption that Emerson's transparent eyeball had more than these two sources and one of them was nineteenth-century optics, I use the following questions as a guideline for my research on the influence of nineteenth-century optics on Emerson and his transparent eyeball vision. What particular optical theories or optical instruments were Emerson's visual metaphors based on or influenced by? How is transparent eyeball vision related to Emerson's discussion of subjective vision, one of the key concepts in nineteenth-century optical theory, in an 1840 *Dial* essay? Despite the significance of these two concepts, transparent eyeball vision for Emerson's transcendental idealism and subjective vision for nineteenth-century optics, little study has sought to answer, or even ask, these questions. The importance of Emerson's *Dial* essay in the context of nineteenth-century optics has gone unnoticed.⁸

A starting point for my answers to the above questions was my realization of how contrasting were Emerson's attitudes toward two great achievements in nineteenth-

century optics: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's optical theory and the panorama, the most popular optical recreation throughout the nineteenth century. Goethe's *Farbenlehre* (*Theory of Colours*), published in 1810, had an enormous influence on antebellum American intellectuals⁹ including Margaret Fuller who translated Johann Peter Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe* in 1839 and served as first editor of the transcendentalist journal *Dial*. In the 1840 *Dial* essay, however, Emerson criticizes Goethe by associating two key concepts in his optical theory—opacity in visual perception and color as the mixture of light and dark— with what Emerson sees as the vice, vulgarity, selfishness, and unmanliness of Goethe and his literary output. In contrast, in “The Poet” (1844), Emerson valorizes the panorama as an ideal for the national poet's pure and masculine vision for the vastness of the American landscape.

Through the contextualization of Emerson's transcendental vision using the backdrop of nineteenth-century theoretical and popular optics, this chapter explores how Emerson drew on three sources, other than Romanticism and Upanishadic philosophy, in theorizing his notion of the transparent eyeball: Immanuel Kant's transcendental and idealistic subjective vision, Isaac Newton's theory of transparent bodies and light transmission and reflection, and the panorama. Emerson valorizes these three sources by contrasting Goethe's optical theory with them.

This chapter purports to argue that Emerson's pro-Newtonian and pro-Kantian positions on the human vision and mind and his valorization of the panorama were central to his project of, in Laura Dassow Walls's terms, “folding scientific truth into moral truth” (*Emerson's Life in Science* 3). Two tendencies in Emerson studies have

served as obstacles or impediments preventing Emerson scholars from further discussing the significance of Emerson's anti-Goethean attitudes toward the human mind and vision: first, to ignore or belittle Emerson's criticism of Goethe and his color theory; second, to define Goethe's *Farbenlehre* as a poetic theory of color for artists rather than a new optical theory for scientists. Against these tendencies, I examine the disturbance that Goethe's challenge to Newton and Kant raised in nineteenth-century optics by focusing on Goethe's double significance—as a founder of physiological optics against the authority of Newton's physical optics and as a founder of the physiological model of subjective vision against the existing idealistic model by Kant. I also demonstrate how Emerson's praise of idealistic subjective vision in contrast to his denunciation of Goethe's physiological subjective vision as selfish, little, and unmanly is associated with his enthusiasm for the infinite, vast, and masculine vision in the panorama.

2.1. Emerson's Damnation of Goethe

Although not a few Emerson studies mention Emerson's life-long interest in Goethe's literature and science during their discussion of other topics and issues, Emerson's critique of Goethe has not received sufficient scholarly attention. There have been fewer than ten studies that specifically focus on Emerson and Goethe, and only a few of them briefly discuss Emerson's criticism of Goethe. In *Emerson's Modernity and the Example of Goethe* (1990), one of a handful of book-length studies on Emerson and Goethe, Gustaaf Van Cromphout denies even the existence of the period during which

Emerson continued to be antagonistic toward Goethe. Van Cromphout asserts that the vast majority of Emerson's comments on Goethe are positive and that even his relatively few negative remarks about Goethe should be considered in the context of his philosophy of self-reliance, which resists excessive reverence and causes him to criticize Goethe and other great men even when he mainly seeks to laud them (4-5). Unlike Van Cromphout, Ralph L. Rusk recognizes that Emerson's railing against Goethe continued for a considerable amount of time in his earlier career.¹⁰ Yet, Rusk belittles Emerson's earlier criticism of Goethe by treating it as transient and insignificant while emphasizing Emerson's valorization of Goethe in *Representative Men* (1850) and other later writings. In his preface to the first volume of *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (1939), Rusk declares that Emerson's "placing of [Goethe's] bust in that private hall of fame called *Representative Men* practically closed the discussion" on his earlier denunciation of Goethe (lii).

Emerson's criticism of Goethe deserves our further discussion, however. Emerson was consistently unsympathetic toward Goethe for most of the first decade of his career as a lecturer and writer. The ten years from 1833 to 1843 were a fertile and significant period during which Emerson grew from "a professor of joyous science" (*JMN*, 8: 8) to one of the most influential nineteenth-century American scholars. From 1833 to 1840, the first seven years of this 'critical period,' Emerson continued to be antagonistic to Goethe by criticizing Goethe's immorality and vulgarity and refusing to define Goethe as "the Genius of the age" (*JMN*, 7: 207). In a journal entry dated August 28, 1833 on his second meeting with Thomas Carlyle in England—his first visit to

Carlyle's house was on August 26 (*JMN*, 4: 219-20)—Emerson complains about Carlyle's high praise of Goethe and asserts, "[Goethe] abused [his *Wilhelm Meister*] with might & main—all manner of fornication. It was like flies crossing each other in the air" (*JMN*, 4: 223). A journal entry written on January 23, 1834 is Emerson's damnation of the "Golden Jubilee" of 1825 that celebrated Goethe's fiftieth year serving Weimar. Emerson writes, "I cannot read of the jubilee of Goethe, & of such a velvet life without a sense of incongruity. Genius is out of place when it reposes fifty years on chairs of state & inhales a continual incense of adulation. Its proper ornaments & relief are poverty & reproach & danger. & if the grand-duke had cut <his> Goethe's head off, it would have been much better for this fame than his retiring to his rooms after dismissing the obsequious crowds to arrange tastefully & contemplate their gifts & Honorary inscriptions" (*JMN*, 4: 258). In his letter to Carlyle written on 20 November 1834, after repeating the same criticism of Goethe's Golden Jubilee, with the change of a few words, Emerson criticizes Goethe's "bad morals" and denounces Goethe as a "pampered" genius who loses his nature (*CEC* 107-108). In an 1838 journal entry, Emerson makes a distinction between Goethe and Shakespeare in terms of the inconceivability of genius. While extolling Shakespeare as an unaccountable genius who with his original style brings up "insoluble problem[s]" that "no history, no 'life & time' solves," Emerson confesses that Goethe "does not astonish" him since Goethe "wrote things which [Emerson] might & should also write, were [Emerson] a little more favored, a little cleverer man" (*JMN*, 7: 17-18). In a 1839 journal entry, Emerson again refuses to define Goethe as "the Genius of the age" when he writes, "Our young scholars

read newspapers, smoke, & sleep in the afternoons. Goethe, Gibbon, Bentley, might provoke them to industry. Undoubtedly the reason why our men are not learned [. . .] is because the Genius of the age does not tend that way” (*JMN*, 7: 207).

After the climax of Emerson’s condemnation of Goethe in the 1840 *Dial* essay, the next three years from 1841 to 1843 were a transitional period during which he slowly changed his attitude toward Goethe from negative to positive, drew back from some of his earlier negative stances on Goethe, and began to call him a genius. In a journal entry in 1841, retracting what he said about the distinction between Shakespeare and Goethe in the 1838 journal entry quoted above, Emerson presents them as examples of genius who “unsettl[e] everything” (*JMN*, 8: 27-28). Although two more journal entries in 1843 demonstrate Emerson’s recognition of Goethe as a genius (*JMN*, 8: 401-402; 430-31), it is not until 1844 that Emerson praises Goethe as “a worshipper of truth and a most subtle perceiver of truth” (*JMN*, 9: 146) and the majority, though not all, of Emerson’s remarks on Goethe became positive.

A careful analysis of Emerson’s journal entries, letters, and essays reveals that with regard to specific aspects such as immorality, selfishness, unmanliness, and worldliness, Emerson continued to criticize Goethe before and during the transitional years of 1841 to 1843 and even after the change in his general attitude toward Goethe since 1844. In his 1834 letter to Thomas Carlyle, Emerson condemns Goethe’s literature as “his misfortune with conspicuous bad influence [of immorality] on his genius” and vilifies his “talent” as “skill in attaining the vulgar ends” (*CEC* 107-108). In a journal entry dated October 12, 1842, Emerson makes cutting remarks on Goethe’s selfishness

when he confesses how it was “droll” for him to see the short list of Goethe’s good deeds in *Memoirs of Goethe* written by Goethe’s secretary Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer. Emerson sarcastically adds, “the true charity of Goethe is to be found in that account of his of the way in which he had spent his fortune in experiments & in his education” (*JMN*, 8: 279). Emerson also criticizes the worldliness and shallowness of Goethe’s works by comparing them to newspapers and costume. In an undated journal entry at the beginning of 1843, after defining “naming” as “the office of the newspapers of the world,” Emerson includes Goethe in the list of the writers who “name what the people have already done” (*JMN*, 8: 322). Emerson ridicules these writers by comparing them to a doctor who can name the disease but cannot cure it. Emerson remarks sardonically, “the thankful people say, ‘Doctor, ’tis a great comfort to know the disease whereof I die’” (*JMN*, 8: 322). In an 1843 journal entry, dated May 19, on modern antiques including Goethe’s *Iphigenia in Tauris* (1787), Emerson calls them the literature of “the costume” which “ha[s] no verity” and for which “no man will live or die” (*JMN*, 8: 400). “The way to write,” to Emerson, “is to throw your body at the mark when your arrows are spent like Cupid Anacreon” rather than to adorn your body with the costume (*JMN*, 8: 400).

A journal entry written on a summer day in 1845 is noteworthy in that Emerson combines the three concepts—worldliness, selfishness, and costume— which he used before in his unfavorable remarks on Goethe. Emerson identifies Goethe as one of “the scholars who have given so many counsels,” whom he characterizes as “too worldly” and “selfish”; he also uses the metaphor of costume again here when he says, “it is all

costume. . . . These things are no more to be regarded than is the colour of the coat, or whether I brought my watch with its face turned out or turned in” (*JMN*, 9: 238-39).

Significantly, on top of the combination of the three negative concepts that he used before, Emerson associates them with immorality and unmanliness when he denounces these scholars as “faithless” since their “counsels come not in their illumination but in their disguise & cowardice” (*JMN*, 9: 238).

Though often considered a culmination of Emerson’s praise for Goethe, his chapter on Goethe in *Representative Men* (1850) is no exception to Emerson’s continued hostility toward Goethe. Paying his homage to Goethe, Emerson starts his essay by repealing his earlier refusal to regard Goethe as the genius and poet of the age: he extols Goethe as a “poet of a prouder laurel than any contemporary” and “the soul of his century” (268). However, soon returning to his earlier negative attitude toward Goethe, Emerson condemns Goethe’s literature and his heroes as immoral, selfish, unmanly, and worldly when compared to George Sand’s. Emerson acclaims Sand’s works as “a truer and more dignified picture” of the world. He also calls her heroes “the servants of great ideas, and of the most generous social ends” and “the centre and fountain of an association for the rendering of the noblest benefits to the human race” who “sacrifice” themselves even “in poverty and extreme [hardship]” (274). In contrast, Emerson denounces Goethe’s romance as “lame and immoral” and even claims that the “weakness and impurities” of Goethe’s hero caused “the sober English public” to be “disgusted” (274).

Emerson's damnation of both Goethe and his works is too tenacious and severe to be belittled as Emerson's lamentation of the lack of morality in Goethe's literary works or to be explained by Emerson's "inveterate habit of stating things in opposites" (Matthiessen 3) and the "judicious and discerning" quality of his criticism and philosophical position (Van Cromphout 4). Also, given Emerson's continued attack on Goethe's immorality, selfishness, worldliness, and unmanliness even when he accepts Goethe as the poet of the age in *Representative Men*, it is reasonable to argue that Goethe's literary works might not be the sole cause of Emerson's antagonistic attitude toward Goethe.

2.2. Goethe's Challenges to Newton and Kant: Context Reexamined

As Emerson notices in "The Spirit of the Times" (1848), Goethe's color theory was a revolution in early nineteenth-century natural science: "The German poet Goethe revolted against the science of the day, [. . .] declared war against the great name of Newton, and proposed his own new and simpler optics. [. . .] The Revolt became a Revolution" (*LL*, 1: 122). In *Opticks* (1704), from his experiment of the sunlight beam that enters the prism and divides into the spectrum of colors, Newton equates the colors with the "diversely refrangible rays" of light and deduces that colors are "corpuscles" that are "split up" or "separated out of the light" (230-31).¹¹ Throughout the following two centuries, Newton's *Opticks* was considered a foundational work in modern optics, and there were few who dared to argue against its authority.¹² The "development of the

theory [on light] did not take place till the present century,” Sir George Gabriel Stokes reminisced in his 1883 lecture on the theory of light, “due to this preponderating influence” and “the great weight of Newton’s authority” (21-22). In view of this overwhelming authority of Newton over nineteenth-century optical theories, it is not difficult to see how sensational and revolutionary Goethe’s repudiation of Newton’s color theory was at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In *Farbenlehre*, Goethe criticizes Newton’s limited understanding of the colors only as physical particles contained within a bundle of light rays and provides a more comprehensive theory of color by dividing colors into three different kinds: physiological, physical, and chemical. Among these three kinds of colors, the most important one for Goethe is physiological colors, which he defines as “effects of light and darkness on the eye” (2). Goethe introduces the concept of physiological colors in chapter one of the book, which is titled “Physiological Colours” after the concept. The first chapter starts with Goethe’s emphasis on the significance of physiological colors: Goethe writes, “We naturally place these colors first, because they belong altogether, or in a great degree, to the subject—to the eye itself” (1). As Rudolf Steiner clarifies in his 1919 scientific lecture course, in Goethe’s color theory, physiological colors are not physical elements of light but “pure” and “simple” phenomena of the observer’s visual perception which “make their appearance” at the boundary between light and dark (Steiner, pars. 8-9).¹³ The contemporary reception of Goethe’s color theory was bifurcated into two branches. Physicists often accused him of amateur speculation with his ignorance of mathematics and physics.¹⁴ In contrast, the majority of sympathizers

were painters, literary writers, and art and literary reviewers who appreciated the influence of Goethe's theory on aesthetics.¹⁵

From this gap in the contemporary reception between science-oriented critics and artistic-minded sympathizers, modern art historians and literary critics often draw a hasty conclusion that Goethe's *Farbenlehre* is not a 'scientific' theory but an 'aesthetic' theory for painters and literary writers. These modern reviewers, as Frederick Burwick points out, "for the most part, have chosen to ignore" Goethe's account of both physical and physiological aspects of visual processes and have limited their discussion to affective and aesthetic aspects of Goethe's color theory by focusing on the "[artistic and] literary relevance of Goethe's color symbolism" (9). Although there have been sporadic efforts to scientifically redeem Goethe's color theory, they unfortunately have not received as much attention from scholars in literature and arts as they deserve.¹⁶

The longstanding stigmatization of Goethe's *Farbenlehre* as an aesthetic and poetic theory for painters and literary writers has been supported by two hypotheses on nineteenth-century optics and Goethe. Various modern discourses on color theory—including guidebooks and lessons on color for students in arts as well as more scholarly works—accept a postulation of the separation between two branches of nineteenth-century optics: physical optics and physiological optics. According to this assumption, physical optics was for scientists who investigate the physical properties of "real" color; in contrast, physiological optics founded by Goethe was for artists who were interested in the effects of "seen" color on the observer's visual perception. For example, in "Color Theory: Color Lessons in Art and Design," *Artyfactory.com*, a website for free

art lessons, says, “Scientists investigate the properties of color theory whereas artists explore its visual effects.” In *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (1985), Rosalind E. Krauss argues that owing to “an unbreachable gulf between ‘real’ color and ‘seen’ color,” the nineteenth-century study of optics split into two branches: one for “scientists” who analyzed the “physical properties” of light and its “capacity to be quantified or measured”; the other for “artists” who concentrated on the “physiology of the perceiving mechanism” (15). According to Krauss, “real” colors for scientists’ physical optics are “independent of human (or animal) perception,” whereas “seen” colors for artists’ physiological optics are “specific distortions” of light which passes through the “[non-]transparent” filter of the “physiological screen” to the human brain (15). There is also a hypothesis on the separation between optics as the science of light for physicists and chromatics as the science of color for painters. By excluding theories on physiological colors by Goethe and his followers from the category of optics, this supposition regards Goethe’s *Farbenlehre* as a revamp of chromatics, that is, an aesthetic science for painters, rather than a new theory in optics.¹⁷

These hypotheses have been regarded as truth by some studies on Emerson and Goethe. By accepting the first assumption of defining Goethe’s physiological optics as an aesthetic and literary theory in contrast to the mathematical and physical methodologies in Newtonian optics, some Emerson scholars argue that Emerson’s praise of Goethe’s anti-Newtonian *Farbenlehre* showcases Emerson’s esteem for the poetic and holistic view of nature as an essence of Goethe’s achievement in natural science. For example, Van Cromphout asserts that Emerson fully approved Goethe’s color theory

because the “poetic approach” in Goethe’s rejection of Newton’s physical optics and the consequential achievement of “the fusion of poetry and science” allow Goethe to be the greatest contemporary poet-naturalist who best meets the requirements for both poets and scientists stated in Emerson’s “The Naturalist” (1834) (26-27). In *Emerson’s Sublime Science* (1999), Eric Wilson follows the tradition of emphasizing the poetic value of Goethe’s color theory when he defines *Farbenlehre* as “the Romantic version” of Newton’s optical theory by focusing on Goethe’s “intense attacks on Newton’s overly abstract, purely mathematical and experimental *Opticks*” (9). According to Wilson, Goethe’s color theory inaugurates an anti-Newtonian movement in natural science, which is called the universal science (8-9). Wilson classifies Goethe and Emerson, along with Coleridge, as belonging to the category of Romantic poets who defy the mechanistic, atomistic, and mathematical notion of matter, the elemental substance comprising the universe, and revive the universal science which endorses the holistic view of nature through the unity of “mind and matter, words and things, poetry and science” (6).

The second hypothesis above, which posits the split between optics as a physical science and chromatics as an empirical natural science for painters, can be found in Peter A. Obuchowski’s *Emerson & Science: Goethe, Monism, and the Search for Unity* (2005). Obuchowski cites support for this assumption from Dennis L. Sepper’s article on Goethe’s color theory: “The *Farbenlehre* . . . is in fact a reconstitution of chromatics, the science of color as distinguished from optics, and a refoundation of the principles and methods of the empirical natural sciences” (qtd. in Obuchowski 34).¹⁸ Obuchowski

insists that although “the[se] words of a modern scholar [Sepper] speak for himself, [they] capture precisely Emerson’s perception” on Goethe’s *Farbenlehre* which Emerson “did not grasp [. . .] in its all details” but whose “revolutionary significance” Emerson did comprehend in its regard to “Goethe’s overall scientific achievement” (34).

This tendency in some Emerson studies to emphasize the poetic and aesthetic significance of Goethe’s color theory is problematic for the following reasons. The two definitions of Goethe’s theory on physiological color— as a new art-oriented optics and as a reconstitution of chromatics, the traditional color science for painters— are hypothetical ones made by modern scholars rather than contemporary receptions from Emerson’s day. Obuchowski simply identifies the second hypothesis above as Emerson’s own understanding of Goethe’s color theory without providing any evidence or explanation. Both Van Cromphout and Wilson also misuse the first hypothesis as a historical fact in order to support a misleading argument that Emerson valorizes Goethe’s anti-Newtonian “poetic” science of color because it is a representative example of the unity of science and poetry which they assume as Emerson’s key concept in his holistic view of nature. Like Obuchowski, Wilson does not provide any concrete evidence to prove that Emerson understands Goethe’s *Farbenlehre* as a “poetic” science of colors rather than an optical science. To support his argument for Emerson’s full approval of Goethe’s anti-Newtonian *Farbenlehre*, Van Cromphout quotes Emerson’s acknowledging statement on Goethe’s color theory in his New Year’s Day journal entry of 1841 and presents it as unquestionable evidence. However, within the broader context of Emerson’s changed attitude toward Goethe—the shift from the damnation of

Goethe by associating his color theory with the vice and vulgarity of his vision and literature in the 1840 *Dial* essay, then, to the acceptance of Goethe's physiological color as an inferior metaphor for time and space in contrast to the use of colorless light as a superior one for the Spirit or Soul in the 1841 essay "Self-Reliance"—Emerson's 1841 new-year statement on Goethe's color theory should be understood as Emerson's compromise with or partial acceptance of it without actually changing his fundamentally negative stance on it. Also, contrary to these two scholars' argument that Emerson favors Goethe's color theory because it is poetic and anti-Newtonian, Emerson's transcendental vision is pro-Newtonian: Emerson depends on Newton's concept of colorless light's transmission through transparent and homogenous bodies to theorize his famous notion of transparent eyeball vision.

In addition, while both Van Cromphout and Wilson identify Emerson's belief in the unity or fusion of science and poetry as a reason for Emerson's praise of Goethe's poetic science of colors, the concept that Emerson actually presents during his discussion on nature, science, and art in *Nature* and "Humanity of Science" is not the unity/fusion of science and art but the unity of nature. As Emerson points out in *Nature*, the unity of nature as a "phenomenon" or embodiment of divine mind or "Universal Spirit" engenders the analogy among all different forms of science and art rather than the unity or fusion of science and art (40-42; 44). Emphasizing the unending efforts in natural science to explore "the immense Universe," Emerson exclaims, "Open any recent journal of science, and weigh the problems suggested concerning Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Physiology, Geology, and judge whether the interest of natural

science is likely to be soon exhausted” (40). For Emerson who believes that “[a]ll science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature” (24) and that “[a] work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world” and the “expression of nature, in miniature” (32), the existence of resemblances among different fields of contemporary natural science and different genres of art is no accident. Emerson asserts:

Thus architecture is called “frozen music,” by De Staël and Goethe.

Vitruvius thought an architect should be a musician. “A Gothic church,” said Coleridge, “is a petrified religion.” Michael Angelo maintained, that, to an architect, a knowledge of anatomy is essential. In Haydn’s oratorios, the notes present to the imagination not only motions, as of the snake, the stag, and the elephant, but colors also; as the green grass. The law of harmonic sounds reappears in the harmonic colors. The granite is differenced in its laws only by the more or less of heat from the river that wears it away. The river, as it flows, resembles the air that flows over it; the air resembles the light which traverses it with more subtile [subtle] currents; the light resembles the heat which rides with it through Space.

(42)

Each of these “particle[s]”—that is, the object of each study in science and art such as “a leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time,” colors, the river, the air, the light, the heat, etc.—is a “microcosm” of the universe because “the laws of the world coexist in each particle” (*Nature* 41-42). In his last science lecture, “Humanity of Science,” delivered several months after the completion of *Nature*, Emerson further explicates his thoughts

on the analogy of science and art in their connection to the unity of nature: “Nature works unique through many forms. All agents the most diverse are pervaded by radical analogies, so that music, optics, mechanics, galvanism, electricity, magnetism are only versions of one law” (26).¹⁹ Significantly, although “[a]ll her [nature’s] secrets are locked in one plant” which is a microcosmic particle, this does not mean the possibility of learning “the laws of the world” or “the unity of nature” through a single study in science or art: Emerson asserts, “she [nature] does not unlock them [her secrets] in any one [particle]” (“Humanity of Science” 26). In short, according to Emerson’s view on nature, there exists the analogy between different forms of science and art not because they are united or fused—i.e. a poetic science or a scientific poem— but because “their law,” which is the unity of nature, is “one and the same” (*Nature* 40-42).

Given all these problems in the tendency to define Goethe’s *Farbenlehre* as a “poetic” science of color, the real significance of Goethe’s optical theory for Emerson should be considered not in terms of its “poetic” aspects but within two interrelated contexts in nineteenth-century optics: the introduction of physiology to the realm of natural science and the tension between two models of subjective vision. As one of the early nineteenth-century intellectuals who introduced physiology to natural science, Goethe played a pioneering role in launching the transition from physical optics to physiological optics. Due to the predominant influence of Newtonian physical optics, mathematical equations and geometric accounts of light rays dominated British optical theorists such as William Whewell, David Brewster, Henry Coddington, Thomas Young, and George Biddell Airy during the eighteenth century and the first four decades of the

next century. However, through the collective achievement of individual French and German researchers in physiology, this new study on the functions of human body organs was transferred to the social sciences in Europe and England by 1840s.²⁰ In *Techniques of the Observer* (1990), based on his careful research for a great number of both contemporary and modern sources, Jonathan Crary successfully repudiates Krauss's thesis on the separation between physical optics for scientists and physiological optics for artists and scientifically redeems Goethe by reevaluating him as a founder of physiological optics, which studies the physiological function of the subject/observer's eye to perceive the color as a phenomenon of light.

Another context behind the significance of Goethe in nineteenth-century optics that Crary rediscovers is the concept of subjective vision engendered by the aftermath of scientific studies on visual perception around the turn of the century. Based on the discovery of optical phenomena such as the retinal afterimage, philosophers and scientists declared in chorus the separation of the observer's visual perception from the external referent. For Kant, this severed link meant a scientific proof to support his idealistic notion of the "subject-as-observer" not as a passive receiver but as the active and autonomous producer of visual experience (Crary 69-70).²¹ In the early nineteenth century, however, scientific studies on vision and the human body began to reveal how different the cognitive process is from Kant's idealistic premise on the observer's subjectivity and the "unity" of his mind in its capacity for reflecting truth by synthesizing and organizing experience (Crary 100-101).²² According to these studies, the human mind, especially in color perception, undertakes an incoherent and

disorganized process of collision, fusion, blending, and merging.²³ Influenced by these scientific studies on the corporeality of the observer's eye as a physiological organ of sensation, Goethe repudiated Kant's esteem for transparency and transcendence in the observer's vision and mind and eventually presented a new model of subjective vision. Goethe's physiological model of subjective vision posits that the "opacity" of the observer's visual perception is a necessary condition for the appearance of the colors as physiological phenomena.²⁴

2.3. Emerson's Valorization of Newtonian Optics and Kantian Idealistic Subjective Vision in His Critique of Goethe

While the concept of subjective vision has received little scholarly attention in Emerson studies, Emerson clearly understood the significance of subjective vision in contemporary optics. In his 1840 *Dial* essay titled "Thoughts on Modern Literature," Emerson demonstrates his in-depth knowledge of the concept. After discussing some traits of modern literature in the first half of the essay, Emerson declares "subjectiveness" as the paramount characteristic of the age. Emerson writes, "The poetry and the speculation of the age are marked by a certain philosophic turn, which discriminates them from the works of earlier times. . . . And this is called *subjectiveness*, as the eye is withdrawn from the object and fixed on the subject or mind" (Italics original 146). Although Emerson does not specify the exact term "subjective vision," he uses "subjective" or "subjectiveness" in the sense of subjective vision by defining

“subjectiveness” as the separation of the observer’s “eye” from “the object” as the referent (146).

Emerson also elucidates his position on the two models of subjective vision: Kant’s idealistic subjective vision and Goethe’s physiological subjective vision. Emerson first reveals his preference for the former by designating the observer as “the subject or mind” (146) which alludes to two essential concepts in Kant’s idealistic model of subjective vision: the notion of the subject-as-observer and Kant’s premise on the unity of the observer’s subjective mind. Emerson further clarifies his valorization of the Kantian model when he introduces two different kinds of subjectiveness and makes the hierarchical distinction between them. In his idealistic model of subjective vision, Kant transcends the observer’s vision into his subjectivity or “mind” and even to “the Ideal of pure reason” which can reflect truth through the process of distilling and essentializing its experience of the “objective” and physical reality” (Crary 100-101).²⁵ In the same way, for Emerson, the superior kind of subjectiveness dwells in the “mind” of the “great man” who pursues “pure and grand ends” (146-47). It also leads us to “nature,” which Emerson, as he did in *Nature* (1836), defines as “metaphysical,” “moral abstractions,” and “essence and soul” rather than “a river and a coal mine” (47). In contrast, the inferior and “vicious” kind of subjectiveness lodges in the “small,” “weak,” and “evil” man’s mind, and it leads us to the “selfish” and “abominable” self of that person and his “short and sordid [ends]” (147-48).

The tension between Kant’s idealistic model of subjective vision and Goethe’s physiological one serves a contextual key to understand how significant Emerson’s

critique of Goethe in the *Dial* essay is for him and his transcendental idealism. As soon as he distinguishes the idealistic and metaphysical subjectiveness from the inferior subjectiveness, Emerson starts off his attack on Goethe with a mention of Goethe's "infect[ion]" with the latter which he calls "the vice of the time" (153). Although Emerson briefly praises the "sagacity" and "industry" of Goethe's "observation" of the objective reality of the world, he soon denounces Goethe's vision as "the actual" and "ephemeral" in its opposition to the "Ideal" subjective vision. "O Goethe! but the ideal is truer than the actual," Emerson deplures, "That is ephemeral, but this changes not" (155). The dichotomy between the "Actual" and the "Ideal" in Emerson's critique of Goethe's vision resonates to the conflict between Goethe's physiological model of subjective vision and Kant's idealistic model. Given the influence of Kant's transcendental idealism²⁶ on Emerson, especially Emerson's preoccupation with Kantian notions of the transparency and purity of the mind and vision, it is not difficult to surmise why Emerson has to harshly criticize Goethe's subjective vision—more exactly, Goethe's vision "infected" with the inferior subjectiveness. Through the disparagement of Goethe's vision as "actual," "vicious," and "sordid" in its contrast to the "metaphysical," "Ideal," and "pure" subjectiveness, Emerson allusively expresses his resentment of Goethe, who rejected Kant's idealistic model of subjective vision and emphasized the opacity and corporeality of the visual perception.

Emerson continues his critique of Goethe by defining Goethe's inferior subjectiveness as an etiological cause of his weakness such as immorality, egotism, and unmanliness. Emerson announces that Goethe's "infect[ion]" with the "vicious" and

“sordid” kind of subjective vision (153) prevents him from having “a moral perception proportionate to his other powers” (156). Emerson even diagnoses Goethe’s condition of lacking moral perception, which is caused by the inferior subjectiveness, as a serious “disease” that should be distinguished from less harmful physiological disorders such as tone deafness and color blindness (156). For Emerson, Goethe’s case is “not merely a circumstance, as we might relate of a man that he had or had not the sense of tune or an eye for colors; but it is the cardinal fact of health or disease” (156). In addition, Emerson identifies self-complacency and egotism as another symptom of Goethe’s infection with the “vicious” subjective vision. Exclaiming how “we are provoked with [Goethe’s] Olympian self-complacency, the patronizing air” and his “egotism” which “lower the moral influence of the man,” Emerson ascribes this shortcoming of Goethe’s to his contagion with the “vicious subjectiveness” as the “vice of the time” (153). A more serious symptom that Emerson diagnoses as emanating from Goethe’s weak and selfish subjectiveness is Goethe’s unmanliness. Emerson demonstrates how Goethe’s “total want of frankness” causes him to “differ from all the great[s]” such as William Shakespeare and John Milton. Contrary to these great poets who can “utter their whole heart *manlike* among their *brethren*,” Goethe’s “small,” “narrow-minded,” and “weak” subjectiveness does not “permit” any “man” to “call Goethe *brother*” (italics mine 153). Emerson also claims that, due to the lack of manliness, Goethe ended up being a “little” and “egotistic” man who “hid himself,” “worked always to astonish” others, “failed in the high sense to be a creator,” and, consequently, “was content to fall into the track of vulgar poets, and spend on common aims his splendid endowments” (153).

Emerson's damnation of Goethe in the *Dial* essay reaches a climax when he explicates the critical "defect" in Goethe's vision and identifies it as a cause of Goethe's failure to be the poet of "the Ideal" instead of the poet of "the Actual" and "limitation" (155-56). According to Emerson, because "nature is moral," only "the mind," in which "the same order" is established, can see it clear and correct (155). This is possible when each of "Truth, Beauty, and Goodness," the three elements that comprise the "humors of [the mind's] eye," is equally and "wholly interfused in the other" (155). The least disproportionate or imperfect "mixture" of these three elements "in that degree diminishes the *transparency* of things, makes the world *opaque* to the observer, and destroys so far the value of his experience" (Italics mine 155). Emerson asserts that, in Goethe's vision, this defect of opacity is so severe and critical that "[n]o particular gifts can countervail" it and it finally causes him to be the poet of the "Actual" whose literature is "worth in the newspaper" (155). Emerson even complains that, unlike the poet of the "Ideal" with a transparent vision, Goethe cannot transcend "out of the dominion of the senses" (155). Emerson expresses his disappointment at Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* by saying, "I am never lifted above myself. I am not transported out of the dominion of the senses, or cheered with an infinite tenderness, or armed with a grand trust" (155-56).

This section on the defect of Goethe's vision in Emerson's *Dial* essay is essential to explore the theoretical basis of Emerson's transparent eyeball vision in *Nature* (1836) within the context of nineteenth-century optics. While discussing the humors of the mind's eye, Emerson implicitly adopts and revises the existing optical theories by

Newton, Kant, and Goethe in order to theorize Goethe's defective vision. This can be also read as his attempt to theoretically explain his transparent eyeball metaphor, which he first introduced four years earlier in *Nature*. The most obvious influence on Emerson's thoughts on the opacity versus transparency of the eye is from Kant. Emerson's view on the human mind's eye and the "equal mixture" of its humors is reminiscent of Kant's idealistic model of subjective vision, which emphasizes the subject-centered epistemology and the "unity" of the mind (Crary 100-101). However, while Kant's preoccupation with the severed link between the observer's pure perception and the referent as "objective reality" in nature (Kant 350) prevents him from "adequately prov[ing] the imbrications of the mind and Nature" (Rowe 7), Emerson seeks to demonstrate the correspondence between mind/"Me" and nature/"Not-Me" (*Nature* 24).²⁷

To bridge the Kantian gap between nature and mind, Emerson brings in Goethe's color theory and his physiological model of subjective vision.²⁸ Considering that Goethe sought to harmonize Kant's idealistic subjective vision with empirical studies on visual perception and the eye as a physiological organ, it is no accident that Emerson appropriates the concepts of "mixture" and "proportion" in Goethe's theory in order to imbue his notion of the mind's eye with physiological hues. In the *Dial* essay, Emerson says, "the least *inequality* of *mixture*, the excess of one element over the other, in that degree diminishes the transparency of things, makes the world opaque to the observer, and destroys so far the value of his experience" (*Italics mine* 155). As his journal entries and lectures show, by 1836, Emerson has already recognized the significance of mixture

and proportion in Goethe's color theory.²⁹ For example, in his 1836 lecture "Humanity of Science," Emerson defines Goethe's notion of colors as "*mixtures* of darkness and light" (*EL*, 2: 24).

Rather than simply borrowing Goethe's optical theory, however, in order to explain how his notion of transparent eyeball vision consorts with his transcendental idealism as well as the notion of nature-mind correspondence, Emerson revises and manipulates Goethe's theory. It is certain that Emerson does not want to follow the same trek made by Goethe, who first sought to support Kant's idealistic notion of subjective vision, but ended up renouncing it and falling into, in Emerson's view, "the dominion of the senses" and "opacity" ("Thought on Modern Literature" 155). For this, Emerson repudiates the notion of opacity in Goethe's physiological subjective vision and shrewdly distorts it into a proof of the limitation of Goethe's vision. Emerson not only changes the mixture of light and darkness in Goethe's color theory into that of "Truth, Beauty, and Goodness," but he also diagnoses the disproportion or "inequality" in the mixture of them as the cause of the defect in Goethe's mind's eye, which diminishes the "transparency" and aggravates the "opacity." This echoes with Emerson's allusion to Goethe's color theory earlier in the *Dial* essay when he identifies selfishness as a characteristic of the inferior subjectiveness and associates intense intellectual selfishness with "partial light or darkness" (147). Furthermore, the connotations of etiology and wizard's concoction in Emerson's manipulative interpretation of the connection between Goethe's color theory and his emphasis on opacity reinforce Emerson's condemnation of

Goethe's subjective vision as "vicious," "small," "narrow-minded," "egotis[tic]," "vulgar," "weak," "disease[d]," and unmanly.

When Emerson switches the mixing ingredients for his conception of transparent vision from light and darkness in Goethe's color theory to "Truth, Beauty, and Goodness," he simultaneously makes more significant modifications. While the mixture of light and darkness in Goethe's theory produces the color, the three elements in Emerson's transparent vision are concocted into "the humors of [the mind's] eye" (155).³⁰ The effect of different proportions in the mixture is also changed. In Goethe's color theory, as Emerson indicates in his 1836 journal, "the different proportions in which light & darkness are mixed" result in different colors (*JMN*, 5: 191). In Emerson's transparent eyeball, the perfect equality of mixture allows the observer to have a transparent vision; however, "the least inequality of mixture" in the eye "makes the world opaque to the observer" (155).

The theoretical basis of these changes is found in Newton's concepts of transparent and homogenous bodies and light's transmission and reflection. It is interesting but not surprising that, to revise and denounce Goethe's optical theory, Emerson chooses to bring in Newton's color theory, which Goethe repudiated. As three journal entries from 1833 to 1841 demonstrate, Emerson had detailed knowledge of these concepts in Newton's theory. Emerson writes in an 1841 journal entry, "Transparent bodies, Newton thought were homogeneous: when a ray of light entered them, being equally attracted in all directions, it was as if not attracted at all, & passed through, but in heterogeneous bodies it lost its way" (*JMN*, 8: 85). In Newton's color

theory, as Emerson points out in this journal entry, transparent bodies such as water and glass are homogeneous. In the same way, in Emerson's transparent eyeball, the equal mixture of the three elements causes the humors of the eye to be homogeneous, which again causes the body of the eye to be transparent. Also, just as, in Newton's theory, the light loses its way in a "compound" or "opaque" body (Brewster 92), Emerson argues that the inequality of mixture in the humors of the eye leads to an opaque vision.

For Emerson, Newton's notion of a transparent and homogeneous body is a scientific proof to verify the resemblance between nature and the human soul. He asserts in an 1833 journal entry, "As the law of light is fits of easy transmission & reflection such is also the soul's law" (*JMN*, 4: 87). The phrase "the law of light is fits of easy transmission & reflection" is a direct quote from *The Life of Sir Isaac Newton* (1831) written by David Brewster, one of the foremost Newtonian scholars in early-nineteenth-century Britain.³¹ Emerson's use of Newton's theory of light to explain the correspondence between nature and spirit is repeated in his 1837 address at Harvard titled "The American Scholar." "These 'fits of easy transmission and reflection,' as Newton called them," Emerson insists, "are the law of nature because they are the law of the spirit" (66). Emerson qualifies Newton's law of light transmission and reflection as evidence for his claim that nature "resembles [the American scholar's] own spirit" (60). He also appreciates Newton's optical theory as the "great principle of Undulation in nature" which he suggests as "the final value of action" for the future American scholars at Harvard.

2.4. Emerson's Panoramic and Transparent Eyeball Vision in *Nature*

The real significance behind Emerson's references to Newton's optical theory is the analogy between Emerson's notion of transparent eyeball vision and Newton's theory of light and transparent bodies. Newton's concept of transparent bodies is analogous to Emerson's notion of transparent eyeball. Newton's theory posits that a ray of light penetrates a transparent body. In the same way, Emerson argues that light as a metaphor for the observer's mind and reason can penetrate through the surface/materiality of an object. For Emerson, Newton's theory of light was more than one example of scientific evidence for the resemblance between nature and the soul. Emerson uses Newtonian optics, especially the Newtonian concepts of transparent bodies and light transmission and reflection, as a theoretical frame for his notion of transparent eyeball that he introduces in *Nature* as a key metaphor for Kantian idealistic subjective vision that transcends the observer's mind and pure reason into the infinite and universal spirit of the "oversoul."

Emerson makes another reference to Newton's notions of transparent bodies and light transmission and reflection, which is one of the four references in his journals during the four years from 1833 through 1837, in a journal entry that he wrote on 12 August 1836 (*JMN*, 5: 189). Out of the total of four journal entries that include the exact same quote on Newton's theory, "fits of easy transmission and reflection," this one is particularly noteworthy because it can be read as Emerson's brief summary or self-review of his first book *Nature*. By mid-August Emerson had just finished writing

Nature, sent the draft to the publisher, and was waiting for “the first proof-sheet of ‘Nature’ to be corrected,” which actually arrived on August 27 (*JMN*, 5: 190).

Presumably, in such an anxious moment of waiting for the publication of his first book and wondering how readers would respond to it, Emerson sought to calm his nervous mind by confirming the most essential points from his book. In fact, the journal entry shows how Emerson revisits and reexamines the thought process that he had in incorporating Newton’s concepts of transparent bodies, light transmission and reflection into his theory of transcendental vision in *Nature*.

The journal entry first reiterates the correspondence between nature and spirit, one of the main doctrines in his transcendental philosophy: “external objects are mere signs of internal essence” (*JMN*, 5: 189). Emerson then moves on to his concept of transcendental, divine vision in its contrast to the physical eye that cannot penetrate through “external objects” into “internal essence.” Emerson writes, “I said once that if you go expressly to look at the moon, it becomes tinsel. A party of view hunters will see no divine landscape. There is however in moon gazing something analogous to Newton’s fit of easy transmission & reflection” (*JMN*, 5: 189). Just as Emerson in the *Dial* essay differentiates the infinity and purity of Kantian idealistic subjective vision from the limitation and worldliness of Goethe’s physiological and “actual” subjective vision, Emerson here contrasts the divine vision from view hunters’ physical eyes that view the moon as mere “tinsel” without seeing through its superficial materiality. Significantly, it is Newton’s theory of light that Emerson uses as an analogy to explain his notion of transparent vision. Just as, in Newton’s theory, a ray of light transmits

through transparent bodies without losing its way, Emerson illustrates how the idealistic and divine subjective vision perceives the moon as a transparent body through which the observer's view can penetrate into the "divine landscape," that is, the infinite correspondence between nature/"Not-Me" and mind/"Me."

In the journal entry, Emerson continues to record what he actually did in the evening on the same day, his walk to Walden Pond, presumably in order to further tranquilize his disturbing mind: "I went to Walden Pond this evening a little before sunset, and in the tranquil landscape I behold somewhat as beautiful as my own nature" (*JMN*, 5: 189). But, this line also can be read as Emerson's symbolic saunter to his upcoming book because it is a repetition of almost exactly the same line, except two changes, that he puts in *Nature* when he explains the notion of transparent eyeball vision. In *Nature*, Emerson writes, "In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature" (26). First, he changes the observer from "I" to "man." Second, the added phrase, "especially in the distant line of the horizon" provides the observer with the panoramic perspective. It is not certain whether these changes were in Emerson's first draft of *Nature* or made after he received the proof-sheets of the draft from the editor. However, these two changes as well as the analogy between Newton's theory and his transcendental vision encapsulate Emerson's answer to one of the most important questions in his mind in the year 1836: how could he theorize and generalize his physical and physiological eye's personal and subjective experience into his idealistic concept of transcendental vision?

Emerson's notion of transparent and "panoramic" eyeball vision is a good

example of the panorama as the retro-extension of the camera obscura. As discussed in the introduction, the panorama has heterogeneous—both revolutionary and reactionary— aspects. As the first visual mass medium for the rising middle class, the panorama has democratic and liberal characteristics. At the same time, however, the panorama reflects and satisfies a nostalgic desire to regain the pre-camera obscura mode of a divine omniscient bird’s-eye view in the nineteenth-century world, in which people have to accept the scientific and philosophic studies on the relativity and subjectivity of an individual observer’s vision whose link to the external referent was once believed but now is known to be severed. In order to elevate an individual observer’s relative and subjective vision into a divine eye’s absolute and omniscient vision, Emerson combines some aspects of the camera obscura with the panoramic perspective on the basis of Kantian transparent subjective vision and crystallizes them into his concept of a transparent eyeball. In order to advance the decorporealization of vision in the camera obscura model of vision, Emerson transforms the observer’s body as a whole into an eyeball itself. With the Kantian transparency of vision, Emerson removes even the corporeality of the eyeball as a body part and leaves only its function to observe. Emerson says, “I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all” (26). Also, Emerson’s eyeball has a monadic viewpoint, which is another characteristic of the camera obscura. In Leibniz’s theory of monads that he proposed in order to “reconcile the validity of universal truths with the inescapable fact of a world consisting of multiple points of view” (Crary 50), the finite and fragmented view in the camera obscura model of vision can reflect in itself the infinity of the universe. In the same way, after

decorporealizing his notion of “I” into a transparent eyeball, Emerson assigns it with another characteristic as part of the divine truth, which encompasses the whole universe, by saying, “the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God” (26). Significantly, Emerson builds up these two characteristics of Emersonian transparent eyeball, decorporalized and monadic, on the basis of the panoramic perspective. In the line that precedes the above two quotes, Emerson elevates the head of “I” into a vantage point that commands a panoramic view of the universe: “my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space” (26).

Nature is not the only writing in which Emerson associates his transcendental idealism with the panorama. In the *Dial* essay, in addition to Newton’s theory of light and Kantian idealistic subjective vision, another source that Emerson draws on in order to further theorize his notion of transcendental subjective vision is the panorama. After announcing the notion of subjective vision as the utmost characteristic of the age and modern literature, Emerson defines “the Feeling of the Infinite” as “another element of the modern poetry” (148). Emerson also states that “this new love of the vast,” which originated in England and the Europe, “finds a most genial climate in the American mind” (149).

The association between subjective vision and American fervor for the panoramic perspective, which Emerson defines as two elements of modern poetry, is significant to understand Emerson’s preoccupation with the observer’s dominance/control over the nature and, more specifically, American landscape as a symbol for national identity. First, both the panoramic perspective and subjective vision

posit the observer's self-centered epistemology and his desire to control, organize, and synthesize the nature and the world.³² Emerson confirms this in the *Dial* essay when he points out that the "Feeling of Infinity" is "akin to this subjective tendency" (148). For Emerson, "a conscious fact" concerning the affinity between these two major characteristics of the age and modern literature is the existence of "One Mind" which has "all the powers and privileges" to "claim and *appropriate* whatever of true or fair or good or strong has anywhere been exhibited" (Italics mine 148).³³ Secondly, the connection between subjective vision and the panorama needs to be examined within the broader context of nineteenth-century American landscape.³⁴ The notion of the correspondence between the external(/nature) and the internal(/mind), which was essential in Emerson's appropriation of existing optical theories to theorize his concepts of transparent eyeball vision, is also a key to understand the significance of landscape and the panorama for Emerson and antebellum America. In antebellum America, American landscape (/nature) as well as landscape paintings including the river panoramas (/pictorial representation of nature) functioned as a symbol for an ideological construction of national identity (/mind) in the nineteenth century by uniting the disparate sections into the national whole.³⁵ Concerning these two associations of the panorama and the panoramic vision with Emerson's transcendental vision—the observer's dominance over the nature and the panoramic vision over the vastness of the American landscape—Emerson focuses on the former in *Nature* and explains the latter in his 1844 essay "The Poet."

In *Nature*, in addition to the passage on the transparent eyeball, a later section

titled “Idealism” elaborates the association between the panorama and Emerson’s idealistic notion of transcendental vision. Emerson first differentiates two levels of higher visions, “the eye of Reason” and the transparent vision, from “the animal eye” as a lower level of vision. While “the animal eye sees, with wonderful accuracy, sharp outlines and colored surfaces,” when “the eye of Reason,” which he identifies as a “higher agency,” opens, “the angular distinctness of objects” begins to “abate” with the addition of “grace and expression” (44). Then, Emerson defines transparent vision as the highest level of vision, which is even higher than “the eye of Reason” (44). More significantly, a few lines later, Emerson makes use of the image of the circular panorama painting in his concept of divine transparent vision. Emerson says, “Idealism sees the world in God. It beholds the *whole circle* of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an aged creeping Past, but as *one vast picture* which God *paints* on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul” (Italics mine 49-50). Emerson compares God as an ideal artist who creates the world to a panorama painter who “paints” the “whole circle” of view, that is, the 360-degree view on a large canvas suspended on the inside wall of a rotunda.

In “The Poet,” Emerson suggests the panorama as the most desirable representational form for depicting the American landscape. Longing for a poet-genius “with tyrannous eye” who can understand the “value” of American landscape, which he terms the vastness of “our incomparable materials,” Emerson proclaims, “America is a poem in our eyes; its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long

for meters” (Italics mine 204). Here Emerson describes the ideal of a national poet as a male observer with the panoramic perspective who can get a control over the vastness of American landscape by orderly delineating and integrating it into a poem. Also, in *Nature*, Emerson asserts that the panoramic perspective provides the poet with a privilege to own American landscape by integrating it into a poem through his panoramic eyes: “none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet” (25). The desire for the orderly delineation and categorization of the chaotic world in the panorama can be found in Emerson’s description of the poet’s spiritual sense of nature as “essences unchanged by man” (24) in which “the *stick* of timber of the wood-cutter” is transcended to “the *tree* of the poet” and “*manifold* natural objects” are integrated into “the *integrity* of impression” (25).

2.5. Coda: From Optics and Transcendental Philosophy to the Socio-Political Debates on Race and Gender

Through the examination of Emerson’s attitudes towards theoretical and popular optics and his appropriation of them for his notion of transcendental vision in *Nature* and the 1840 *Dial* essay, I have demonstrated how Emerson denounces Goethe’s theory of color and physiological subjective vision as actual, immoral, and unmanly while valorizing its counterparts—such as Newton’s theory of light, Kant’s idealistic subjective vision, the panorama, and Emerson’s notion of transparent eyeball vision as

the combination of these three— as ideal, moral, pure, and masculine. In “Self-Reliance” (1841), Emerson again expresses his esteem for Newton’s physical optics by alluding to the Newtonian concepts such as colorless light and colors as physical particles, by saying, “all things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and, in the universal miracle, petty and particular miracles disappear” (103). Also, when he adds, “Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light” (104), Emerson clearly shows his pro-Newtonian and anti-Goethean attitude in his use of optical metaphors for his idealistic distinction between nature and the soul: Goethe’s physiological colors as a metaphor for the actual (“time and space”) versus the Newton concept of colorless light as a metaphor for the ideal (“the soul”).

Interestingly, in his later writing, Emerson extends his hierarchical distinction between light/transparency/panorama as metaphors for spirit, morality, and masculinity versus color/opacity/myopic vision for body, evil, and femininity into his discussion on race and gender. In an 1844 address “The Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies” delivered at Concord, Massachusetts, Emerson applies the two optical metaphors, colors and colorless light, to his understanding of the contrast between the intellect and racial colors. Emerson acclaims, “if you have man, black or white is an insignificance. The intellect,— that is miraculous! Who has it, has the talisman: his skin and bones, though they were of the color of night, are transparent, and the everlasting stars shine through, with attractive beams” (228). By differentiating the light beam that symbolizes the intellectual’s transparent mind and soul from colors that refer to racial skin and body, Emerson constructs the race-neutral ideal of emancipation; at the same

time, however, he erases or ignores the significance of the racial-colored actual, that is, the reality of slavery and racial discrimination. Right before the above quote, based on his belief in the social Darwinian doctrine of the survival of the fittest, Emerson reveals his view on race, slavery, emancipation, and man: “If the black man is feeble, and not important to the existing races not on a parity with the best race, the black man must serve, and be exterminated. . . . the might and the right are here: here is the anti-slave: here is man” (228). As history shows, such a hegemonic idea of race, which posits that inferior races are destined to, or deserve to, be slaved or even “exterminated,” has often been distorted into a justification for crimes against humanity.

Another example of Emerson’s use of optical metaphors in applying his transcendental philosophy into his absolutist vision toward socio-political issues such as race and anti-slavery can be found in his defense of John Brown, the fanatic leader of the Pottawatomie massacre who committed the atrocious midnight murders of five proslavery men. Radical abolitionists including Brown demonized, and even used violence against, their enemy as well as those who did not agree with their views on the basis of their self-assured righteousness. In defending Brown, Emerson depends on his confidence in possessing direct access to a “higher law.”³⁶ More significantly, in an 1859 speech at Boston and an 1860 speech at Salem, Emerson utilizes his notion of “panoramic” and transparent vision in eulogizing Brown as “a representative of the American Republic” and “the rarest of heroes, a pure idealist” (256). Emerson aestheticizes Brown’s panoramic vision, “far-seeing skill,” as “a royal mind” (261-62). He also compares Brown to Newton’s concept of transparent and homogeneous body

when he asserts that Brown “live[s] to ideal ends, without any vulgar trait, without any mixture of self-indulgence or compromise, such as lowers the value of benevolent and thoughtful men we know” including Goethe (261). In addition, Emerson argues that Brown is “so transparent that all men see him through” (256).

In contrast to his admiration for the “noble” masculinity in John Brown’s panoramic and transcendental vision of anti-slavery, in an 1855 address on women’s suffrage at the Woman’s Rights Convention in Boston, Emerson uses optical metaphors to elaborate his thought on the gender difference, especially the superiority of men’s will/soul over women’s sentiment/nature. For Emerson, “Man is the will, and woman the sentiment” (*LL*, 2: 19). In emphasizing women’s sentimentality in contrast to men’s power of “logic,” Emerson compares women’s sentiment to “iodine,” the purple-colored chemical element, while associating men’s reason with “light”: “[Women] are more delicate than men,— delicate as iodine to light” (*LL*, 2: 19). Although Emerson first valorizes sentimentality as women’s “strength,” he soon identifies it as their disadvantage. Emerson asserts:

There is no gift of Nature without some drawback; if we are here, we cannot be there; if we have day, we must forego night. . . . [Women] dwell more than men in the element and kingdom of illusion. They see only through Claude Lorraine glass. They emit from all their pores a colored atmosphere, one would say, wave upon wave of coloured light, in which they walk evermore, and see all objects through this warm tinted mist which envelops them. (*LL*, 2: 22)

Alluding to the hierarchy between physiological color as a metaphor for “time and space” versus light for “the soul” in his earlier essay “Self-Reliance,” Emerson here insinuates another hierarchical opposition between women’s sentiment as a “gift of Nature,” which is confined by the limitation of time and space, versus men’s will/intellect/soul, which can penetrate through the transparent eyeball vision and transcend into the oversoul. To substantiate his view on the inferiority of women’s sentiment, Emerson uses three references to theoretical and popular optics: colored light; an optical instrument, Claude glass, whose surface is tinted with a dark color; the vapor secreted from women’s bodies, which alludes to the Goethean concept of opacity in his physiological model of subjective vision. Through these references, Emerson diagnoses a colored mist emitted from female bodies as a cause of women’s defective vision tinted with illusion and sentiment.

As the two addresses above—the address on women’s suffrage and the address on the emancipation of slavery— indicate, for Emerson, only man of the intellect, whether white or black, can transcend into the oversoul, the realm of light, while women can only see through the colored mist, which emit from their own bodies. Emerson’s project of, in Walls’s term, “folding scientific truth into moral truth” and folding philosophical debates into political debates is encapsulated in his choice of the three references in their contrast to the three optical metaphors for his transcendental vision: colored light versus colorless light, the framed view through the Claude glass versus the all-embracing view of the panorama, the corporeality of the tinted mist versus the decorporealization of the transparent eyeball.

Notes

1. It is often believed that, as Stephen E. Whicher and Robert E. Spiller argue in their introduction to *EL* in 1959, Emerson's interest in science was the principal cause for "his shift from a theological to a secular base for his moral philosophy" and for "the intellectual crisis which led to his resignation as pastor" (1:1). In "Fields of Investigation: Emerson and Natural History" (1992), however, David M. Robinson ascribes Emerson's esteem for natural science to his theological background by emphasizing the influence of natural theology on Emerson's valorization of natural sciences and his view on nature. Robinson argues that Emerson's notion of nature as the reflection of the "Soul" or "truth" is based on natural theology "which saw the natural world as a centerpiece of the revelation of religious truth to humanity" (95). For example, as Robinson points out, in his 1830 sermon, Emerson already praised the increasing interest in natural science as "particularly hopeful sign of a shift" in America (94).

2. These four lectures are "The Uses of Natural History," "On the Relation of Man to the Globe," "Water," and "The Naturalist." See the first chapter "Science" of *EL*, 1: 1-83.

3. In his essays, journals, and letters, Emerson frequently demonstrates his interest in optical theories such as Augustin Jean Fresnel's wave theory of polarized light. For example, in a journal entry dated on May 10, 1833 during his trip to Italy,

Emerson records his visit to Professor Amici's exhibition of optical instruments including the microscope, the telescope, and the camera lucida (*JMN*, 4: 170).

4. In "The Transcendentalist" (1842), Emerson identifies the "optative mood" as a major characteristic of "[o]ur American literature and spiritual history" (146).

5. In "The Parade of Science," Chapter 2 of his 2007 book titled *Emerson's Nonlinear Nature*, Christopher J. Windolph provides a review of the expanding subject of Emerson and science. See also Laura Dassow Walls's *Emerson's Life in Science* (2003), Eric Wilson's *Emerson's Sublime Science* (1999), and Peter A. Obuchowski's *Emerson and Science: Goethe, Monism, and the Search for Unity* (2005).

6. I borrow the term "prescriptive analysis" from Dermot H. McKeone's book on the methodology of media analysis in the social sciences, *Measuring Your Media Profile* (1995). According to McKeon, while open analysis identifies dominant subject matters or messages within the text, prescriptive analysis examines a specific topic in a wide range of communication parameters within a closely defined set of contexts.

7. In *Emerson, Romanticism and Intuitive Reason* (2005), Patrick J. Keane explores the influence of British Romanticism and German idealism on Emerson's transcendentalism. Also, George D. Chryssides points out that Emerson was one of the first Americans who possessed a copy of the Upanishads and argues that Emerson's theory on a person's transcendental connection to "the oversoul" is nothing other than the Upanishadic idea: *Atman*, the individual self or soul, is *Brahman*, the supreme, transcendental, and universal spirit (82). See also Barbour 67.

8. About the significance of subjective vision for antebellum American writers, especially Margaret Fuller, see Larry J. Reynolds's "Subjective Vision, Romantic History, and the Return of the 'Real': The Case of Margaret Fuller and the Roman Republic," *South Central Review* 21 (2004): 1-17.

9. Concerning the influence of Goethe on antebellum New England intellectuals, in his 1876 book titled *Transcendentalism in New England: A History*, Octavius Brooks Frothingham claims, "No author occupied the cultivated New England mind as much as [Goethe] did" (57). Also, as for the influence of Goethe's *Theory of Colours* on Thoreau, see Christina Root's "The Proteus Within: Thoreau's Practice of Goethe's Phenomenology" in *Janus Head* 8.1 (2005): 232-49.

10. Rusk argues, "A letter records the discovery that Goethe seems to speak of nothing so wisely as of art. [. . .] These epistolary echoes *continue for many years*" (Italics mine, *L*, 1: lii).

11. See also *Opticks* 1-4; Steiner, pars. 8-9; Burwick 20; Sepper, *Goethe Contra Newton* 146-47; and Brewster 74.

12. See Burwick 25-27.

13. See also Brewster 74.

14. "To Goethe's early critics," Sepper observes, "the fact of his errors and intemperance was beyond doubt. [They believed that] Goethe had misunderstood Newton's theory and did not have enough training in mathematics to judge its true rigor. Because Goethe was interested primary in the artistic, poetic, and psychological uses of color, he did not properly evaluate the physics of color. His very talent, his poetic gift,

inclined him more to romanticism, speculative *Naturphilosophi*, and the overvaluation of mere appearances, than to theoretical science and objective reality” (*Goethe Contra Newton* 3-4). See also Burwick 9.

15. See Burwick 9; Sepper, *Goethe Contra Newton* 3-4.

16. In a 1941 article titled “Die Goethische und Newtonische Farbenlehre im Lichte der modernen Physik,” Werner Heisenberg, who is best known for his uncertainty principle of quantum physics, examines Goethe’s argument on physiological perception as a scientific theory and differentiates Newton’s physical premises from Goethe’s physiological ones (Burwick 10). Two book-length studies in 1980s also understand the Goethe-Newton controversy as the conflict between physical optics and physiological or psychophysical optics. In *The Damnation of Newton: Goethe’s Color Theory and Romantic Perception* (1986), Frederick Burwick defines Goethe’s *Farbenlehre* as his “counter-measure to [Newton’s] mathematical and mechanistic approach to optics” (5). Similarly, in his 1988 book *Goethe Contra Newton: Polemics and the Project for a New Science of Color*, Dennis L. Sepper asserts that Goethe’s focus on the observer’s visual perception in *Farbenlehre* “inevitably draws into the ambit of color science matters of psychology, physiology, and perception” (x). The advent and necessity of Goethe’s theory of physiological colors, as Sepper aptly claims, were engendered by Newton’s failed attempt to give the “psychophysics” of color “a purely physical basis” (x).

17. See Sepper, “Goethe Against Newton” 177.

18. Ibid.

19. By the mid-August of 1836, Emerson finished writing *Nature* and sent the draft to the publisher (*JMN*, 5: 190). “Humanity of Science” was delivered on December 22 in the same year, at the Masonic Temple, Boston (*EL*, 2: 22).

20. As Crary points out, “From 1820 into the 1840s physiology was very unlike the specialized science it later became; it had then no formal institutional identity and came into being as the accumulated work of disconnected individuals from diverse branches of learning.” (79).

21. Crary uses the term “subject-as-observer” to denote Kant’s notion of the subject as the observer. In the same way, in *Picture Theory*, W. J. T. Mitchell asserts, “the ‘subject’ is paradigmatically a spectator, the ‘object’ a visual image” (18-19).

22. Concerning my use of a male pronoun “him” to connote Laura Mulvey’s notion of male gaze, see note 16 in chapter 1.

23. See Crary 100-102.

24. See Crary 70-71. Crary writes, “Perception occurs within the realm of what Goethe called *das Trübe*—the turbid, cloudy, or gloomy. Pure light and pure transparency are now beyond the limits of human visibility” (71).

25. See also Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* 350-51.

26. In his 1842 lecture “The Transcendentalist,” Emerson honors Kant when he says, “the Idealism of the present day acquired the name of Transcendental from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant” (145).

27. Emerson’s understanding of the correspondence between mind and nature was also influenced by Emanuel Swedenborg. In “The Poet” (1844), Emerson reveals it

when he says, “Swedenborg, of all men in the recent ages, stands eminently for the translator of nature into thought. I do not know the man in history to whom things stood so uniformly for words” (203).

28. As Burwick asserts, *Farbenlehre* “represents Goethe’s effort to explain sensory perception as the link between subjective quality and objective quantity; thus it provides a scientific epistemology bridging the Kantian abyss between phenomena and noumena” (9-10).

29. See *JMN*, 4: 87; *JMN*, 5: 189.

30. Here Emerson also alludes to the four humors of Renaissance physiology.

31. See the footnote 186a in *JMN*, 4: 87.

32. In Kant’s idealistic model of subjective vision, the observer is an active producer of visual experience with the unity of the mind and its capacity for reflecting truth by synthesizing and organizing experience. This resonates to the aforementioned characteristics of the panoramic perspective as follows: a penetrating access to truth through the fantasy of transparent vision; his unlimited dominance and visual control over the chaotic, unreadable, and uncontrollable world from a privileged, detached, and safe vantage viewpoint; his desire to orderly delineate, organize, and synthesize the world.

33. Emerson’s choice of the words “appropriate . . . whatever . . . anywhere” is reminiscent of his appropriation and revision of Kant’s, Goethe’s and Newton’s optical theories for his concept of transparent eyeball and transcendental vision.

34. J. Hillis Miller aptly points out, “concern for Nature is displaced by concern for subjectivity as it may be described in metaphors drawn from the natural world” (qtd. in Lawrence 22).

35. See Baker 81; Miller “The Panorama” 46. Paula Marantz Cohen also argues that “the spectacle of natural landscape as the hallmark of America’s authenticity and power” was “represented as vaster and purer than the more conventionally settled landscape of Europe” in order to signify “the nation’s creative potential and moral superiority” (73).

36. See Gilman M. Ostrander, “Emerson, Thoreau, and John Brown” (1953); John J. McDonald, “Emerson and John Brown” (1971); and Kent Ljungquist, “‘Meteor of the War’: Melville, Thoreau, and Whitman Respond to John Brown” (1989). See also Reynolds, “‘Strangely Ajar with the Human Race’: Hawthorne, Slavery, and the Question of Moral Responsibility” 42; 65.

3. HAWTHORNE AND THOREAU ON THE PANORAMA AND EMERSONIAN TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

With the development of print technology and the rise of a reading public in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the great success of the panorama in America as well as Europe led to the rapid acceptance of the technical term “panorama” into everyday language.¹ Journalists and periodical writers contributed to the spread of the metaphorical use of the term. It came to denote broader meanings, including a real landscape that deserves to be the subject of a panoramic painting, memories and recollected images passing in one’s mind’s eye, and a complete survey or overview of a particular subject or knowledge. In some European countries such as France, where the circular panorama was not imported until 1799, periodicals introduced the metaphorical meanings of the word “panorama” even before the arrival of the technical term.² As Grahame Smith argues, the rapidity with which the panorama was accepted into the language and literature bespeaks the social influence of the panorama and the “long-continued interest” in it in the nineteenth century (31).

In antebellum America, Emerson and many other literary writers used the panorama as a visual and epistemological metaphor through which they viewed and represented the world. Given Emerson’s influence on his fellow antebellum writers and the significance of the panorama for his transcendental optics and his views on selfhood, gender, and race,³ it is no accident that the panorama serves as a litmus test for their

attitudes toward Emerson's transcendental philosophy as well as their different positions on contemporary social and political issues.

Walt Whitman, a follower of Emersonian transcendentalism and an active agent of American expansionism, joins Emerson in the social construction of masculinity by praising the national "male" poet whose panoramic and masculine vision can encompass the vast expanse of American landscape. Whitman develops his own panoramic mode of writing in order to praise the American public and the nation's nature in *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and "Democratic Vistas" (1871).⁴ His panoramic mode is evident in his style of encyclopedic inclusiveness and expansiveness, his valorization of the panoramic view of American scenes, and, most significantly, his 'democratic' but, at the same time, 'transcendental' notion of the all-encompassing "I." Toward the end of "Song of Myself" in the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman famously declares, "I contradict myself; / I am large . . . I contain multitudes" (87).

In contrast, Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne repudiate the Transcendentalists' totalizing and absolutist idealism through their critique of the panorama and their emphases on opacity and ambiguity. They reveal how the panorama satisfies and reinforces the desire for visual and physical control over the rapidly expanding world and the fantasy of access to truth. In "The Piazza" (1856), Melville depicts a shift from the idealized beauty of the sublimity offered by a panoramic view to a close view of the impoverished reality in Marianna's house that first disappoints the narrator but soon leads him to have sympathy for her. In "The Bell-Tower" (1855), Melville criticizes Bannadonna's panoramic perspective from the top of the bell tower

over people on the ground as a symbol for his monstrous desire for technology to rule the world. Also, Melville's contestation of masculinity and American optimism regarding a control over nature through various characters aboard the slave ship in "Benito Cereno" (1855) and the whale ship in *Moby-Dick* (1851) is inseparable from his critique of the panoramic perspective and Emersonian transcendental subjective vision.⁵ Similarly, in *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), Hawthorne's suspicion of not only idealist reformers' absolutist vision—which seem universal in their belief but often turn out to be narrow and dogmatic, especially Hollingsworth's masculine hegemony— but also Coverdale's position as a voyeur with a bird's-eye viewpoint is analogous to his critique of the camera obscura and the panorama in his earlier works.

Women writers such as Margaret Fuller and Sarah Payson Willis, whose pen name is Fanny Fern, intervene and renegotiate the conventions of the panorama and the panoramic perspective in order to challenge the social construction of the panorama as the nationalistic, idealistic, and masculine vision that aestheticizes, objectifies, and controls nature and people. Questioning and contesting the male-centered notions of self, nature, and landscape, these women writers valorize the more sympathetic and humanized vision of a female observer and present it as an alternative to the panoramic vision and other aesthetic conventions such as the sublime and the picturesque, which objectify the landscape and "other" people into a spectacle and reorganize them to fit into the socially prescribed visual formula.⁶

In *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* (1843), her first book-length work in which she reports on her first travel to the Great Lakes and western prairies, Fuller explains how

she first strives to follow but ends up renouncing the pre-conditioned ways of observing nature in the conventions of the sublime and the picturesque, which she has gained from her experience of viewing panorama paintings and reading existing travel writings. In the book, which Susan Belasco Smith aptly reads as her symbolic departure from Emersonian idealism (xviii), this renunciation acts as a starting point for her external and internal travel to explore a more sympathetic and humanized vision of nature and other people.⁷

Willis, the first woman in the United States to have a regular column in a newspaper, the highest-paid columnist and novelist of the time, and a women's rights activist,⁸ provides a social critique of the panorama as a social convention of seeing and representing the world. She counters the construction of the panoramic vision as the privilege of a male observer by presenting boys, girls, and mothers as the observers of panoramic views. Unlike Emerson's self-reliant male observer, they fail to or refuse to secure their detached position from the disorder of the world and, like Fuller, often have sympathetic attitudes towards other people.⁹

Among American Renaissance writers who recognize the significance of the panorama for ideological formations in the antebellum period, this chapter focuses on Hawthorne and Thoreau. More than any other antebellum writers, Hawthorne and Thoreau explicitly use the panorama as a key metaphor to contest their positions towards Emerson's philosophical idealism as well as political activism such as abolitionism and social reform movements.

Based on my understanding of the panorama as an extension of the camera obscura, I explore how Hawthorne denounces and undermines Emerson's transcendental idealism through his critique of the panorama and the camera obscura in his literary works. I argue that Hawthorne emphasizes the ambiguity and relativity of the human vision and mind and challenges Emerson's concepts of transparent vision and the unity of mind by describing the panorama, the camera obscura, and other optical devices such as the magic lantern and the diorama, as negative spaces/viewpoints that the observer is entrapped in or seeks to escape. I read Hawthorne's "Sights from a Steeple" (1831)—his rewriting of Tobias Smollett's *The Devil upon Crutches* (1750), which is a typical example of *flâneur* literature—as his satirical critique of Emersonian fantasy for access to truth through transparent and panoramic vision.

Concerning Thoreau's references to the moving panorama in his journal entries and essays, I demonstrate how Thoreau associates his spectatorship at the panorama exhibition with his view of nature and human vision. Although Thoreau's subjective vision, like Emerson's, is transcendental and idealistic, Thoreau's esteem for nature's materiality and multiple perspectives also causes his panoramic vision to be corporeal and empirical in its deviation from the decorporealized vision in Emerson's notion of transparent eyeball.

3.1. From the Camera Obscura to the Panorama: Hawthorne's Critique of Transcendental Vision and Political Idealism

Hawthorne's "Chiefly about War-Matters" (1862) is one of his controversial writings that have been the target of both nineteenth-century and recent criticism, which denounces his anti-abolitionism and his skepticism about the Civil War with the charge of his complicity in pro-slavery movements. Even his acquaintances and friends, such as Emerson and George William Curtis, "were convinced that Hawthorne was politically incorrigible" (Faust 132). However, in "'Strangely Ajar with the Human Race': Hawthorne, Slavery, and the Question of Moral Responsibility" (2005), Larry J. Reynolds contends that Hawthorne's skepticism about the war and emancipation does not rise out of his alleged proslavery sentiments but out of his tendency to assume multiple perspectives both in his life and in his literary works, as well as his antipathy toward violence and the "faulty vision" of absolutism (64).¹⁰ In some sense, what made Hawthorne skeptical about the Civil War was not only the physical violence in the war but also the violence of the pro-war partisan politicians' and transcendentalists' self-righteous totalitarianism in their enforcement of their "narrow view of the world upon others" (Reynolds, "Strangely Ajar" 65).

In this section, I explore the ways in which Hawthorne uses his critique of the camera obscura and the panorama in "Chiefly about War-Matters" as well as in his other literary works in the antebellum period—including "Sights From a Steeple" (1831), "Fancy's Show Box: A Morality" (1837), "The Old Manse" (1846), "Main-Street"

(1849), and “Ethan Brand” (1850)— in order to criticize the dogmatic, totalizing, and absolutist perspective in both philosophical and political idealism such as Emerson’s transcendentalism and idealistic social reform movements. By examining the debates on the opacity versus transparency in philosophical discourses on human subjectivity as well as scientific studies on sensory perception in the early nineteenth century, I demonstrate how Goethe’s and Arthur Schopenhauer’s recognition of ambiguity and corporeality in their physiological model of subjective vision subverts Kant’s concepts of transparency and unity in his idealistic model of subjective vision. Building upon my definition of the panorama as the extension of the camera obscura and the analysis of the connection between Emerson’s transcendental optics and Kant’s idealistic subjective vision in the earlier chapters, I analyze how Hawthorne’s emphasis on ambiguity and multiple perspectives in his critique of the panorama and the camera obscura counters Emerson’s notion of transparent and panoramic vision.

The concept of subjective vision was the outcome of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century philosophers’ response to the scientific studies on sensory perception, especially visual perception. Influenced by scientific experiments on some optical phenomena such as the retinal afterimage, these philosophers declared the subjectivity of the human vision, that is, the separation of the senses from the referent. The first representative response was Kant’s. As Crary aptly points out, this severed “link between the external referent and the sensory perception” provided Kant with a scientific proof to support his opposition to Lockean empiricists’ notion of the observer as a passive receiver (69). It verified Kant’s idealistic notion of the observer as “the

active, autonomous producer of his or her own visual experience,” which was also “posited by various ‘romanticisms’ and early modernisms” (Crary 69). In the early nineteenth century, however, due to the increasing number of optical inventions followed by the prevalence of empirical studies of vision and the human body by physiologists and psychophysicists such as Johann Friedrich Herbart, Jan Purkinje, and Joseph Plateauon, philosophers such as Goethe and Schopenhauer began to recognize the “opacity,” “ambiguity,” and “corporeality” of the observer (Crary 71-76).

A good example of showing this interrelationship between philosophical theories on vision and the scientific studies on the human body and sensory perception in the early nineteenth century can be found in Herbart. Herbart’s scientific study on “the dynamics of the afterimage” and his “attempt to quantify the movement of cognitive experience” were originally aimed to provide scientific evidence for “Kant’s notion of the unity of the mind” and his “positive account of the mind’s capacity for synthesizing and ordering experience” by preventing “incoherence and disorganization” (Crary 100-101). However, from his scientific experiment on human perception, Herbart found that “[t]he mind does not reflect truth” but, rather, involves the “chaotic” process of “collision,” “fusion,” “blending,” and “merging” (Crary 100-101). Herbart’s case is significant not only because his scientific study actually influenced nineteenth-century thinkers’ theories on the subjectivity of the human vision but also because both Goethe and Schopenhauer had the same shift in their attitude toward Kant’s idealism.

Just as Herbart did, Goethe and Schopenhauer first sought to harmonize Kant’s notion of the subjective observer as an active and autonomous producer of visual

experience with empirical scientific studies of subjective vision.¹¹ However, Goethe and Schopenhauer drew on the corporeality of the observer's eye as a physiological organ of sensation, the opacity of vision, and the ambiguity of the observer and finally came to realize that "once the phenomenal self is reduced to simply one empirical object among others, the autonomy and authenticity of its representations are also put in question" (Crary 77).¹²

Schopenhauer's relation with Kant can be compared to Hawthorne's attitude toward Emerson. Like Herbart, when Schopenhauer began his study on subjective vision, he expressed his veneration of Kant by "term[ing] his own philosophy 'idealist'" (Crary 76). Although conventional accounts have routinely identified Schopenhauer as a 'subjective idealist,' as Theodor Adorno points out, Schopenhauer actually found that Kant's notion of "the *transcendental subject*" was "mere *illusion*, 'a *phantom*'" (Italics mine, Crary 77). In the same way, as Reynolds indicates in "Hawthorne and Emerson in 'The Old Manse,'" although, at the first stage of Hawthorne's relationship with Emerson, Emerson's transcendentalism and "[Hawthorne's] knowledge of *Nature*, especially, affected his life as well as his writing," later in "The Old Manse," Hawthorne "struggled to free himself from the Emersonian idealism" (63), and "undermined Emerson's influence in his life through 'The Old Manse'" by "supplant[ing] Emerson's transparent eye-ball vision with one more timebound and earthbound" (67).¹³

Considering the association between transparent vision and the panoramic perspective in Emerson's *Nature*, it is no exaggeration to say that Hawthorne's continuous interest in and critique of the panorama in his literary works was a way of his

undermining Emerson's transcendental idealism. In the same way that Goethe's and Schopenhauer's recognition of the opacity and ambiguity of the human vision led to their subversion of Kant's idealistic subjective vision, to which Emerson was greatly indebted, Hawthorne's emphasis on ambiguity and his critique of the panorama can be read as his alternative to the Cartesian subject's unity of mind and transparent vision in both Emerson's transcendentalism and idealistic reform movements. At the core of Descartes's esteem for the camera obscura, there was "the need to escape the uncertainties of mere human vision and the confusions of the senses" (Crary 48). Similarly, in America during Hawthorne's day, an individual self's escape from uncertainties and confusions was what absolutist social reformers and partisan politicians both in the North and the South needed in order to justify the use of violence for their political and economic interests. As Reynolds points out in "Strangely Ajar," to prove their righteousness and demonize their enemy, Hawthorne's "absolutist contemporaries" did "profess to have direct access to the will of God" (42) and "tr[y] to impose one narrow view of the world upon others" (65).

Given that the panorama is the expansion of the camera obscura, it is no surprise that Hawthorne's depiction of ambiguity starts from his condemnation of the camera obscura. Hawthorne often embodies his critique of the camera obscura through his narrators who come out of a camera-obscura-like space. From the very beginning of "Chiefly about War-Matters," the narrator who is identified as "a peaceable man" is aware that his dark room—"camera obscura" in Latin—no longer provides him with the Emersonian observer's secure position. In *Nature*, Emerson enumerates the examples of

lower level of transparent vision and one of them is “a camera obscura” (45). Although these lower levels of transparent vision—as in “the shore seen from a moving ship” or “a balloon” and the town seen from a coach— can “give the whole world a pictorial air” with “[t]he least change in our point of view,” their difference and “detach[ment] from all relation to the observer” provide him with a “stable” position in front of the spectacle: Emerson writes, “In these cases, by mechanical means, is suggested the difference between the observer and the spectacle — between man and nature. . . man is hereby apprized that whilst the world is a spectacle, something in himself is stable” (45). In contrast, in “Chiefly about War-Matters,” the war causes the narrator’s position in his room to be no longer detached or secluded: “There is no *remoteness* of life and thought, no *hermetically sealed seclusion*, except, possibly, that of the grave, into which the disturbing influences of this war do not *penetrate*” (Italics mine, 43).

In addition, considering the influence of Newton’s optical theory on American Renaissance writers, especially on Emerson’s transcendental optics, as discussed in the previous chapter, it is no accident that the image of the narrator’s “contemplation” from his secluded and confined space into which the influences of the war, like light, penetrate corresponds exactly with the image of the camera obscura in Newton’s *Opticks*. In *Opticks*, Newton describes, “[i]n a very dark Chamber, at a round hole . . . made in the shut of a window . . . the Beam of the Sun’s Light, which came in at that Hole, might be refracted upwards toward the opposite wall of the chamber” (qtd. in Crary 40). What a spectator in the camera obscura observes is not a real object but its life-like but illusory image, which penetrates through a small hole and is reflected on the opposite wall in the

dark room. In the same way, in “Chiefly about War-Matters,” what the narrator contemplates from his “hermetically sealed seclusion” is not the real outer world but “certain fantasies” to which he is “endeavoring to give life-like aspect” in order to use them in the romance that he is writing (43).

Not surprisingly, “Chiefly about War-Matters” is not Hawthorne’s first work in which he uses the image of the camera obscura to signify the limitation of an observer’s self-righteous perspective and hegemonic Cartesian cogito. From Hawthorne’s earlier works to one of his last works, *Septimius Felton*, the image of the camera obscura is repeatedly represented with two patterns of repertoire. First, the observer who is imprisoned in or attracted to the camera-obscura-like secluded space finds his own sin in the shifting images at which he peeps through the show box. Secondly, as in “Chiefly about War-Matters,” the observer comes out of seclusion to get a panoramic view of the outer world. In both cases, the image of the camera obscura is depicted as a negative space that the observer is entrapped in or seeks to escape.

Two representative examples of the first case are “Fancy’s Show Box: A Morality” and “Ethan Brand.” In “Fancy’s Show Box,” Mr. Smith, “a venerable gentleman,” who has no “dread of solitude,” sits alone in a room (450). Mr. Smith observes “three figures entering the room” through “the brilliant medium of his glass of old Madeira” (451). The three figures are Fancy, “assum [ing] the garb and aspect of an itinerant showman,” Memory, “in the likeness of a clerk,” and Conscience, “conceal[ing] both face and form” (451). The room fits the description of the camera obscura not only because of the observer’s solitude but also because of the light effect for obscurity and

the deceptive images of the three figures reflected on the wine glass: “Through the dim length of the apartment, where crimson curtains muffled the glare of sunshine and created a rich obscurity, the three guests drew near the silver-haired old man” (451). It is the show box that shows Mr. Smith his inner self, which is filled with sinful thoughts and acts, in contrast to his social image, which “ha[s] long been regarded as a pattern of moral excellence” (450).

Hawthorne’s depiction of the show box as the reflection of the observer’s sinful inner self also can be found in “Ethan Brand.” Ethan Brand, who was a lime-burner, returns from his journey to “search for the Unpardonable Sin” (231) to the kiln “that had been the scene of [his] solitary and meditative life” (231). Just as the light from the show box visualizes the devil inside Mr. Smith, the light of fire from the kiln caused Brand to find a devil hidden in his mind and decide to have a journey and experiment to search for the unpardonable sin. His journey has changed him into a Cartesian observer who, from his superior position, regards others as objects of his ruling gaze: “he [is] now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study” (241). As a Cartesian observer, Brand seeks to objectify others and never allows himself to be the object of others’ observation. However, the old German Jewish showman’s diorama subverts Brand’s superior position by presenting Brand’s “unpardonable sin” as an object of his own peering gaze.

In both “Fancy’s Show Box” and “Ethan Brand,” the showman undermines Mr. Smith’s and Ethan Brand’s self-righteous superiority by making them peep through the show box in which they observe their own sin and devils. The obscure shifting images in the show box in these two short tales resonate with ambiguities and shifting perspectives in Hawthorne’s tales and essays. Given the analogy between the show box and Hawthorne’s own tales, it can be argued that Hawthorne’s tales serve to do to his readers what show boxes do to his characters. Hawthorne might have intended to show his absolutist contemporaries the illusion of their superiority and righteousness through his tales.

The same image of the observer’s coming out of the camera-obscura-like seclusion to the outer world is repeated both in “The Old Manse” and *Septimius Felton*. In the same way that, in “Chiefly about War-Matters,” the Civil War compels the narrator to renounce his seclusion, both the narrator of “The Old Manse” and Septimius leave their study to observe the spot of the Concord battle. In *Septimius Felton*, Septimius’s detachment from the world does not secure him the Cartesian subject’s authority over the world. After returning to his study from the outer world where he had to stand by and watch Rose, who has been “the object of [his] boy-love” (5), being insulted by a British officer, Septimius deplorably confesses that “[i]t is [his] doom to be only a spectator of life” because he is “dissevered from” and “look[s] on as one apart from” the life of the outer world (20). In “The Old Manse,” the negative image of the study is reinforced by “the grim prints of Puritan ministers that hung around” which makes his room “still blacker” (270). In addition, the Puritan ministers’ images as “bad

angels” foreground the symbolic meaning of the study as a site of self-righteousness and religious absolutism (270).

In “Chiefly about War-Matters,” the next step that the narrator takes is to leave his seclusion and take a railroad trip to get an panoramic view of the war “with [his] own eyes” (43): he observes the continuous scenery of the war through the train window. The association between the railroad and the panorama is essential to understanding the narrator’s position as an observer of the war in “Chiefly about War-Matters,” not only because both were phenomenally popular in Hawthorne’s day but, more importantly, because these two inventions together had a great influence on the changed perception of vision, time, space, and, accordingly, language and narrative style in the nineteenth century. Although both the panorama and the railroad were late-eighteenth-century British inventions, after being introduced in the United States, they were enormously successful throughout the nineteenth century. Interestingly, both the railroad and the panorama were at their peak of popularity right before the Civil War (1861-65) broke out and Hawthorne wrote “Chiefly about War-Matters.”¹⁴ After “the first American railroad, the Baltimore and Ohio, was chartered in 1827,” the railroad industry continued to rise and began to boom throughout the 1840s, and, in 1862 when “Chiefly about War-Matters” was written, the Pacific Railroad Act was passed to “authorize the Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads with capital and generous land grants” (Kirby 4).¹⁵ After laying tracks across the country, the railroad industry changed the people’s perception of time and space, which finally necessitated “a national standardization of time and new, fluid conceptions of human mobility and physicality” (Weinstein 134). In

The Railway Journey: Trains and Travel in the 19th Century (1979), Wolfgang Schivelbusch coins the term “panoramic perception” of train travel in order to signify the changed notion of time and space—in Schivelbusch’s words, the “annihilation of time and space”—and the transformed relationship between the passenger and the landscape (41). Based on Schivelbusch’s concept of the “panoramic perception,” Lynne Kirby describes the change of visual perception in railroad travel: “with his/her view mediated by a framed glass screen, the passenger’s visual perceptions multiplied and became mobile, dynamic, panoramic. . . . the traveler sees the objects, landscapes, etc., through the apparatus which moves him/her through the world” (45).

Just as the panoramic perception of train travel changed people’s perception of time and space, the first thing the narrator observes in his railway travel is the change of time, and more specifically, the change of seasons with the change of space. Although it is still winter in the northern states, as the narrator travels from Boston through New York and New Jersey to Philadelphia, he observes that the season changes. The shifting image of seasons from the north to the south causes the narrator to change his perspective on the war from the northerners’ conventional viewpoint to a position that is more sympathetic with the southerners. While the narrator describes the winter in the north as a negative and pessimistic image by using some expressions such as “long, dreary” (43) and “with little or no symptom of reviving life” (44), he idealizes the early summer that already comes in the South, which is the Rebels’ territory, through his optimistic imagination. Furthermore, in contrast to his damnation of John Brown, a hero of northern radical abolitionists, as a “blood-stained fanatic” (54), the narrator feels

compassion for Rebel prisoners. The narrator writes, “[n]either could I detect a trace of hostile feeling in the countenance, words, or manner of any prisoner there. Almost to a man, they were simple, bumpkin-like fellows, dressed in homespun clothes, with faces singularly vacant of meaning, but sufficiently good-humored” (55). Through the correspondence between the narrator’s response to the shift of the seasons through his train travel and his changed view on the war and the South, Hawthorne not only criticizes radical abolitionists’ absolutist view of idealizing John Brown as an anti-slavery hero and demonizing Rebel soldiers as “the devil’s agents” (Reynolds, “Strangely Ajar” 62), but he also suggests the significance of multiple perspectives on the war.

The multiplicity of perspectives is built into Hawthorne’s narratives through the multiplicity of narratorship and readership. In “The Old Manse,” the narrator performs multiple roles such as a storyteller, sightseer, and a tour guide for the reader: the narrator says, “Perhaps the reader—whom I cannot help considering as my guest in the old Manse, and entitled to all courtesy in the way of sight-showing” (270-71). The two different meanings of the Old Manse cause the narrator and the reader to play double roles. While the narrator invites the reader as a guest to the Old Manse as a house, Hawthorne invites readers to “The Old Manse” as a narrative and asks them to play the role of a character called “reader.” The narrator also invites the reader as a spectator of the panoramic view in their journey to the spot of the Concord fight by saying, “We stand now on the river’s brink. It may well be called the Concord” (271). The narrator’s double role both as a tour guide and as a storyteller is reminiscent of the role of a

lecturer-narrator for the moving panorama who invites spectators to a virtual tour through landscape and “provide[s] geographical and historical information and anecdote, calling attention to scenes of sublimity, loveliness, religious association, patriotic significance, or pathos and modeling the emotions spectators were intended to feel” (Moldenhauer 231).

Hawthorne uses the multiplicity of narratorship in “Chiefly about War-Matters” in order to criticize the conventional representation of the Civil War from the northern perspective and provide an alternative perspective on the war. Like the narrator in “The Old Manse,” the narrator in “Chiefly about War-Matters” plays a double role as a storyteller and as a virtual tour guide for the panoramic view of the war. Also, as in “The Old Manse,” it seems that the narrator’s double role resonates with the role of the narrator-lecturer at the exhibition of the moving panorama: just as the moving panorama does, his verbal description of the panoramic view of the war can be a substitute for real-life travel through the panoramic landscape of war. However, while a narrator for the moving panorama seeks to make the spectators believe that they see the real in the illusion by concealing the illusion or making it look like a reality, the narrator in “Chiefly about War-Matters” attempts to divulge to his readers the illusion and pretension of the war. Throughout his railroad travel, what the narrator can see and hear about the war are nothing but “many rumors of the war” and “a rather prominent display of military goods at the shop-windows” rather than the real “sign of [the war]” (44). What occurs to the narrator’s mind is not either the cause for the war or the patriotism but his worry about “an incalculable preponderance” of “military titles and pretensions”

and the militarism in politics after the war ends (45). The narrator also demystifies the illusion of the war: as he describes, as soon as “six thousand” union soldiers stepped into “the Virginia mud,” they found that “the phantasmagory of a countless host and impregnable ramparts” of their enemy “dissolved quite away” (45). Unlike the stereotyped image of the war in the conventional representation of it—including Civil War panoramas which aestheticized the sublimity of battlefields, painted documentaries of union generals’ careers, and idealized both battlefields and generals as icons of the patriotic war—¹⁶ the narrator satirizes the situation by saying, “It was as if General McClellan had thrust his sword into a gigantic enemy, and, beholding him suddenly collapse, had discovered to himself and the world that he had merely punctured an enormously swollen bladder” (45)

Interestingly, after demystifying and satirizing the illusions of the war, what the narrator observes next is another illusion, which is a pictorial representation of “the natural features of the Rocky-Mountain region” painted as a fresco on the wall of the Capitol by Leutze (46). Although the painting is only an incomplete “sketch in color” consisting of “bare outlines,” the narrator highly praises not only the painting itself but also the painter. The narrator writes, “the noble design spoke for itself upon the wall”; “the work will be emphatically original and American” (46). What is questionable here is that the narrator, who has been skeptical about the Northern states’ cause for the war and the war itself, suddenly changes his original attitude and begins to praise the painting’s propagandism for the Northern states as a “good augury at this dismal time” which is “full of energy, hope, progress, irrepressible movement onward” (46).

However, the narrator soon finds the blind spot in his original reading of the wall painting. When turning his eyes onto “another part of the Capitol,” the narrator finds that “the freestone walls of the central edifice are pervaded with great cracks, and threaten to come thundering down, under the immense weight of the iron dome” (47). After realizing that the seemingly “indefeasible” and “undisturbed” augury of the painting on the wall is doomed by “a sinister omen” of cracking, the narrator satirically regards the upcoming “catastrophe” of the cracking wall as “appropriate” because it can signify the drop of “the Southern stars out of our flag” (47).

Hawthorne also adds the voice of an editor who criticizes the narrator’s essay from the perspective of a pro-war abolitionist by putting his editorial comments in a footnote. As Clark Davis points out, “Chiefly about War-Matters” has two levels of voices; one is the narrator’s “authorial voice [which is] fictionalized as ‘a Peaceable Man,’” and the other is editor’s voice, both of which are written by Hawthorne (101).¹⁷ Through the editor’s voice, Hawthorne warns his readers that there is no single correct view on the war and the narrator’s panoramic perspective from the train window is one of many possible views on the war.

“Main-street” is another example of Hawthorne’s literary work that criticizes the limitation of the panorama through the use of multiplicity in narratorship and spectatorship. In “Main-street,” there are two levels of narratorship: one is the “disembodied narrative voice” and the other is the showman-lecturer of the panorama that Hawthorne appropriates “as a metaphor for a storyteller” (Richards 48). While the showman exhibits to the citizens of Salem the shifting panoramas of their history,

narration for the panorama continues to be interrupted by his spectators, who are “excessively literal-minded” and have “an inbred distrust of the simplest conventions of representation” (Brand 14). In addition, the two levels of narratorship bring out two levels of readership or spectatorship—one is the spectators in the text and the other is Hawthorne’s readers. Whenever the spectators in the text interrupt the showman’s narration, our identification with the spectators is disrupted by the appearance of the disembodied narrator. As Jeffrey Richards observes, “when the disembodied narrator brings the showman before us, we are placed somewhere behind the audience, able to see the showman, panorama, and spectators” (49). By preventing readers from identifying with the spectators, Hawthorne not only prompts the readers to recognize the multiplicity of narratorship and readership/spectatorship, but he also satirizes the antebellum American fervor for the moving panorama. At the end of the short fiction, the exhibition of the moving panorama abruptly stops because the machine breaks down and the painted scenes stop moving.

“Sights from a Steeple” is Hawthorne’s most obvious critique of the panorama and Emersonian transparent vision. In this short fiction, Hawthorne rewrites Alain René Le Sage’s *Le diable boiteux* (1707), which is the most typical example of *flâneur* literature.¹⁸ As one of the most popular forms in the literature of the early nineteenth century, the literature of the *flâneur* evidently represents the “Feeling of the Infinite,” which Emerson defines as one of the two elements of modern poetry in the *Dial* essay. Termed by Walter Benjamin¹⁹ and later often called “panoramic literature,” the literature of the *flâneur* demonstrates how the *flâneur*, the figure of the observer-stroller,

delineates the metropolis such as London and Paris. *Flâneur* literature was originally popular in Europe throughout the eighteenth century and later imported to, and widely read by, American writers and readers. Le Sage's *Le diable boiteux* is a story about a Spanish student aristocrat who frees a devil from a bottle and receives the reward of observing the whole city in general and the interior of every house in particular; the devil not only lifts him up to the top of a church but also extends his wand to remove all the roofs of the houses. Thirty-seven years after the publication of *Le diable boiteux*, the word "panorama" was coined by Robert Barker to refer to his invention of a new form of painting which later has been called the circular or static panorama.

In "Sights from a Steeple," Hawthorne not only clearly references *Le diable boiteux*, but he also associates the panoramic perspective in Le Sage's story with characteristics of Emersonian transparent vision. Like the student aristocrat and the devil in *Le diable boiteux*, the narrator takes a bird's-eye view of the town from the vantage point on the top of a church steeple, which is also exactly what panorama painters did in order to draw sketches of cityscape in the early nineteenth century. The narrator says to himself on the rooftop:

Hitherward a broad inlet penetrates far into the land . . . over it am I, a watchman, all-heeding and unheeded. O that the Limping Devil of Le Sage would perch beside me here, extend his wand over this contiguity of roofs, uncover every chamber, and make me familiar with their inhabitants!. The most desirable mode of existence might be that of a spiritualized Paul Pry, hovering invisible round man and woman,

witnessing their deeds, searching into their hearts, borrowing brightness from their felicity, and shade from their sorrow, and retaining no emotion peculiar to himself. (43)

Rather than simply alluding to Le Sage's story, the narrator imagines that the devil in the story would sit next to him. While the devil in *Le diable boiteux* allows the student aristocrat to observe the inside of every house in town as a reward for releasing him from the bottle, the narrator wants the devil to use his magic and give him "the most desirable mode of existence," which is an allusion to the transparent vision that Emerson defines as the highest mode of vision. In Emerson's transcendental optic, the transparent eyeball turns the observer into the Cartesian subject whose decoporealized vision and central and detached position never allow him to be an object to others' gazes. In the same way, the narrator wishes to be "a spiritualized Paul Pry" who is "all-heeding and unheeded" because his body is "invisible" and his vision can penetrate into people's "hearts" as well as their "deeds." Also, the narrator's yearn to search into others' "hearts" is reminiscent of transcendentalists' desire for a penetrating access to truth through the fantasy of transparent and penetrating vision.

However, unlike Sage's original novel, Hawthorne's narrator ends up affirming that he cannot be a normal Paul Pry, not to mention the Emersonian version of spiritualized Paul Pry. Alluding to Hawthorne's denunciation of the panorama and Emerson's transparent vision, the narrator confesses, "But none of these things are possible; and if I would know the interior of brick walls, or the mystery of human bosoms, I can but guess" (43). The narrator also hints at Hawthorne's emphasis on

ambiguity and obscurity of the human vision when he realizes how opaque his vision is and “how little . . . [a] panoramic spectator would actually accomplish” (Brand 12).

Contrary to the Cartesian subject’s visual and physical control over the world and, the narrator finds how “powerless” he is “to direct or quell” any “tumult” in town.

Moreover, unlike the decorporealized and transparent body of the eyeball in Emersonian transcendental theory of vision, the corporeality of his body causes him to feel scared of the approaching storm, dislike his panoramic viewpoint, and finally decide to come down: “I love not my station here aloft, . . . with the blue lightning wrinkling on my brow, and the thunder muttering its first awful syllables in my ear. I will descend” (48).

3.2. Thoreau and the Moving Panorama

One may assume that Thoreau must not have joined the moving panorama rage in antebellum America, considering the popularity of the moving panorama as a form of public entertainment and Thoreau’s aversion to show business. For example, in *Walden* (1854), Thoreau reveals his explicit resentment against the “illusion” of “a hundred ‘modern improvements’” including popular entertainment: Thoreau writes, “rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. . . . The style, the house and grounds and ‘entertainment’ pass for nothing with me” (74-75; 262). Also, he often disparaged “crowded, mercantile Boston and its cultural offerings” (Moldenhauer 239). In spite of his aversion to show business and cultural artifacts in Boston, Thoreau went to Boston to attend at least two exhibitions of moving panoramas. He also participated in one of the

discount group tour packages that combined the railroad tour from Boston to Montreal and Quebec with the virtual tour in *Burr's Seven Mile Mirror*, which were promoted by William Burr, the owner and the exhibitor of the moving panorama and his partner Josiah Perham.²⁰ In his Canadian lecture and essay, Thoreau even pays homage to “Burr’s popularization of a spectacular landscape through his panorama and his package excursions” (Moldenhauer 228). Thoreau’s esteem for the moving panorama was not simply due to his love of nature and excursion. Significantly, the moving panorama gave Thoreau “truth” while other artifacts in popular entertainment “passed for nothing” with him other than the same old themes such as “love,” “money,” and “fame.”

Thoreau’s attendance at two moving panorama exhibitions in Boston is indicated in an undated journal entry between January 10th and February 9th in 1851.²¹ The entire journal entry is worthy of careful examination not only because it provides some information about the contents of the two panoramas Thoreau viewed but also because it contains Thoreau’s response to them. Thoreau writes:

I went some months ago to see a panorama of the Rhine. It was like a dream of the Middle ages—[.] I floated down its historic stream in something more than imagination under bridges built by the Romans and repaired by later heroes past cities & castles whose very names were music to me made my ears tingle—& each of which was the subject of a legend. There seemed to come up from its waters & its vine-clad hills & vall[e]ys a hushed music as of crusaders departing for the Holy Land—[.] There were Ehrenbreitstein & Rolandseck & Coblentz which I knew only

in history. I floated along through the moonlight of history under the spell of enchan[t]ment[.] It was as if I remembered a glorious dream as if I had been transported to a heroic age & breathed an atmosphere of chivalry[.] Those times appeared far more poetic & heroic than these[.]

Soon after I went to see the panorama of the Mississippi and as I fitly worked my way upward in the light of today—& counted the rising cities—& saw the Indians removing west across the stream & heard the legends of Dubuque & of Wenona’s Cliff—still thinking more of the future than of the past or present—I saw that this was a Rhine stream of a dif[ferent] kind that the foundations {one leaf missing}. (*WT*, 3:181-82)

Based on the date of the journal entry and the contents of the two panoramas Thoreau describes, we can ask: what were these two panoramas that Thoreau saw and when did he see them? In “Thoreau, Hawthorne, and the ‘Seven-Mile Panorama,’” Joseph J. Moldenhauer seeks to answer these questions. By focusing on “the ‘vagueness’ of Thoreau’s ‘some months ago’” in his journal entry in January or February in 1851, Moldenhauer opens a possibility that the year of Thoreau’s attendance at these two panoramas does not have to be 1850. After examining Bronson Alcott’s journal entry in 1849, Thoreau’s correspondence to H. G. O. Blake on 10 August 1849, and *The Boston Directory* from July 1849 to July 1850, Moldenhauer concludes that the two panoramas were the Bostonian Benjamin Champney’s *Great Panoramic Picture of the River Rhine and Its Banks*, exhibited between 11 December 1848 and 9 June 1849, and *Mr. S. B. Stockwell’s Colossal Moving Panorama of the Upper and Lower Mississippi Rivers*,

which played for about three weeks starting 27 August 1849. Moldenhauer even asserts, “Thoreau’s most plausible opportunity to attend was on Saturday, 26 May” when, according to Alcott’s journal entry, Thoreau “proudly obtained” several copies of Champney’s *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, which was published on the same day, and carried one to Alcott (240-41).

Although Moldenhauer’s conclusion about the identity of the two panoramas and the date of Thoreau’s viewing seems to be based on convincing circumstantial evidence, Moldenhauer does not present any explanation about the foundational assumption that allows him to find all other circumstantial evidence—in other words, why the Rhine panorama was necessarily Champney’s *Great Panoramic Picture of the River Rhine and Its Banks*. For example, if Champney’s Rhine panorama was the first Rhine panorama exhibited in America, Moldenhauer’s assumption is evidently correct. Even when Moldenhauer’s conjecture about the date of Thoreau’s attendance at the Rhine panorama exhibition, 26 May 1849, is correct, however, it is still possible that it was not the first time for Thoreau to attend at the exhibition of the same panorama—as indicated above, Champney’s Rhine panorama exhibition began on 11 December 1848— or that Thoreau might have attended another Rhine panorama exhibition before.

I suggest these possibilities of Thoreau’s attendance at Champney’s or another Rhine panorama before 26 May 1849, which Moldenhauer assumes as the date of Thoreau’s attendance at the Rhine panorama in his journal entry, because of a scene about Thoreau’s first night in prison in his “Civil Disobedience.” This scene, I think, is an allusion, if not a direct reference, to the moving panorama. In the scene, Thoreau

blows out the lamp in order to look out the window from the prison cell. Thoreau's description of what he observes through the prison window in "Civil Disobedience" is extremely similar to what he describes of the Rhine panorama in his journal entry, which I quoted above. Thoreau writes:

It was like travelling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town-clock strike before, nor the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating. It was to see my native village in the light of the Middle Ages, and our Concord was turned into a Rhine stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me. They were the voices of old burghers that I heard in the streets. I was an involuntary spectator and auditor of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village-inn—a wholly new and rare experience to me. It was a closer view of my native town. I was fairly inside of it. I never had seen its institutions before. This is one of its peculiar institutions; for it is a shire town. I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about. (31)

The object of Thoreau's description is not the panoramic painting but the scenery seen from his prison cell. Considering the striking resemblance between the two, however, it is no exaggeration to say that Thoreau uses his experience at the panorama exhibition in order to express his feeling about the scenery he views through the prison window—the effect of a sudden defamiliarization of Concord's scenery, which was familiar to him

before his first night in prison. The common aspects between the two descriptions are several. Some contents of the description are identical or almost same—such as Rhine, the Middle ages, and chivalry/knights. In addition, the comparison between the Rhine and American landscape is common between the two descriptions. In the journal entry about the actual two panoramas, the Mississippi in the second panorama is compared to the Rhine in the first one. In the same way, in “Civil Disobedience,” Thoreau feels that “our Concord was turned into a Rhine stream” (31). Moreover, the description of Concord scenery in “Civil Disobedience” is filled with allusions to the travelling showman’s exhibition of optical instruments, one of the most common contents of which was both native and ancient European landscape—for example, “travelling into a far country,” “visions of knights and castles passed before me,” and “an involuntary spectator and auditor” (31).

Of course, in order to prove that Thoreau’s description of Concord landscape in prison in “Civil Disobedience” can be a reference to the Rhine panorama, more evidential sources—whether they are direct or circumstantial—are needed. However, if there is a possibility that the prison scene can be accepted as circumstantial evidence for Thoreau’s attendance at the Rhine panorama exhibition, we need to reconsider Moldenhauer’s conclusion about the source of the Rhine panorama in Thoreau’s journal entry. As indicated above, for Moldenhauer, the most probable date of Thoreau’s attendance at the Rhine panorama exhibition was May 1849. However, “Civil Disobedience” was originally published in Elizabeth Peabody’s *Aesthetic Papers* in the spring of 1849 as “Resistance to Civil Government” (Lauter 1), and this opens the

possibility that Thoreau might have seen Champney's or another Rhine panorama before May 1849.

My reading of Thoreau's description of Concord landscape in prison in "Civil Disobedience" as an allusion to the moving panorama can be also supported by the fact that, like Emerson, Thoreau recognizes the significance of the panorama as a philosophical metaphor for the correspondence between nature and the spirit and between the self and the oversoul. Greatly influenced by Emerson's transcendental idealism, Thoreau shares the Emersonian fantasy of access to truth through transcendental subjective vision. Through the eulogy of the moving panorama in his journal entries²² and essays such as "Civil Disobedience" (1849) and *Walden*, Thoreau demonstrates the influence from, and his veneration to, Emerson's notion of transparent and panoramic vision. At the same time, however, Thoreau uses the panorama as a key metaphor to explicate how his concepts of the selfhood and subjective vision are different from Emerson's.

Thoreau's story about the artist of Kouroo in the "Conclusion" of *Walden* crystalizes how he references and revises Emersonian transparent and panoramic vision. In this story, Thoreau first shows Emerson's influence on him by alluding to two of the sources for Emerson's notion of transparent eyeball: the panoramic vision and the dialectic of self and nature/universe in Upanishads. Thoreau's artist pursues timeless perfection by making a perfect staff. Thoreau writes, "one day it came to his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter" (259). In "Self-Reliance," Emerson disparages time

and space by comparing them to “physiological colors which the eye makes” in their contrast to the light of the soul (104). Similarly, by defining time as an “ingredient” for “an imperfect work,” Thoreau asserts that “time does not enter” into the ideal artist’s “perfect work” (259).

What is crucial in this story comes when the staff is completed. Thoreau describes, “When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions” (259-60). Given that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers including Descartes often used the staff as a metaphor for human vision,²³ it is no accident that Thoreau substitutes the expanded staff for the artist’s extended vision. In the same way that Emerson in *Nature* compares God as an ideal artist who creates the world to a panorama painter, Thoreau’s ideal artist procures the panoramic perspective as his staff/vision expands into the universe, that is, “the fairest of all the creations of Brahma.” Also, just as Emerson’s transparent vision accomplishes the orderly reorganization of the world through its control over the world, the ideal artist in Thoreau’s story achieves “a world with full and fair proportions” by completing the perfect staff (259). For both the “true” self in *Nature* and the ideal artist in *Walden*, their extended vision provide them with visual control over the world from the panoramic perspective, that is, elevated and centered position of vantage viewpoint. In addition, Thoreau’s reference to Brahma, the highest god and ultimate essence of the universe in the Upanishads, echoes the influence the Bhagavad Gita on Emerson’s transparent eyeball vision.

While alluding to the influence of Emersonian transcendentalism on his notion of transcendental vision, Thoreau also modifies Emerson's Kantian idealism by harmonizing it with the Lockean empiricist concept of the correspondence between the self and nature. Contrary to the decorporealized vision and the transparent body of the eyeball in Emerson's transcendental optics, Thoreau uses the wooden staff as a metaphor for his theory of transcendental vision to emphasize how the metaphor and, by extension, the vision are both physical and idealistic. His metaphor of a staff is physical because it is made of wood; but, it is also idealistic because the artist's purpose and resolution were pure. Thoreau explicates the artist's search for a perfect stick:

It shall be perfect in all respects, . . . He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, . . . but he grew not older by a moment, His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way. (259)

Interestingly, the purity of his purpose and resolution, which enabled him to find a perfectly pure and suitable wood stick for his perfect and pure staff, also transcended his body into a pure being of unchanged youth that overcame the physical limitation of Time. Emerson's transparent vision not only causes the body of the eyeball to be decorporealized but also erases the physical surface of any object and penetrates through it into its soul and further into the oversoul. However, for Thoreau, material, art, soul,

and body are one. Thoreau writes, “The material was pure, and his art was pure; how could the result be other than wonderful?” (260). The result of using pure material was the ideal staff, which is his pure art. Also, the result of creating pure art was to purify the artist’s body and soul. The expansion of the perfect staff as a metaphor for the extension of the artist-observer’s vision symbolically visualizes Thoreau’s revision of Emersonian transcendental vision, which harmonizes Emerson’s Kantian idealism with the Lockean empiricist concept of the correspondence between self/subject and nature/object.²⁴

Thoreau further explains the spectator’s sense of doubleness, both physical and idealistic, in “Solitude” in *Walden*, which can be read as his response to these three different influences. Thoreau asserts:

With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; . . . We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the driftwood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. I *may* be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, I *may not* be affected by an actual event which appears to concern me much more. I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience,

but taking note of it; and that is no more I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. This doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes. (131-32)

For Thoreau, “I” is not only “myself as a human entity” but also a “spectator” who is “remote from myself” (131). The former concept of “I,” which is an empirical and physical being in the world such as “the driftwood in the stream,” is concerned with the Lockean empiricist concept of self/subject. The latter one is reminiscent of Kant’s idealistic subjective vision and of Emerson’s notion of “me” in its distinction from “Not Me” in *Nature*. Just as the concept of subjective vision means the severed link between the observer’s vision/subject and the referent/object, Thoreau suggests the separation between “I” and my “actions and their consequences” including the act of seeing and the visual perception as the consequence. Also, Thoreau’s second concept of “I,” which he compared to “Indra,” the chief god in Hindu scripture, is reminiscent of the observer/subject in Kant’s idealistic model of subjective vision in that Kant characterizes the observer’s vision and mind as metaphysical, ideal, and, pure. The contrast between Thoreau’s two concepts of “I” alludes to Emerson’s notions of “Me” and “Not Me.” When Thoreau recognizes the presence of “a part of me” which is “not a part of me” but “spectator,” the first concept of “a part of me” signifies Emerson’s “Me” and Kant’s observer/subject while the second concept of “a part of me” means Emerson’s “Not me,” which includes not only nature, art, and other men but also “my own body” (24). While

acknowledging the presence of these two concepts of “I,” Thoreau emphasizes the correspondence between these two concepts and defining them as the “doubleness” of “I” in order to revise and counter the hierarchical separation between “Me” and “Not Me” in Emerson’s transcendentalism. For Emerson, the “true” man’s transparent vision transcends “Me” into the oversoul, but erases the physicality of “Not Me.” However, Thoreau understands the coexistence of spiritual “I” and physical “I” as the doubleness of the human mind and vision. Significantly, Thoreau recognizes the sense of doubleness from—or, at least, expresses the sense of doubleness through—his experience at “a theatrical exhibition” such as the moving panorama exhibition, which he again associates with “a kind of fiction” in the actual life, that is, “the play of life” (132).

Thoreau explains the doubleness of “I” in its comparison to the spectatorship at the moving panorama in his journal entry dated on 1 November 1858. Despite the time gap between the 1851 journal entry and the 1858 journal entry and between the latter and the description of Concord landscape from the prison cell in “Civil Disobedience” in 1849, the connection between these three different texts in terms of their allusion to the moving panorama is evident. In the 1858 journal entry, Thoreau writes:

I seemed to recognize the November evening as a familiar thing come round again, and yet I could hardly tell whether I had ever known it or only divined it. The November twilights just begun! It appeared like a part of a panorama at which I sat spectator, a part with which I was perfectly familiar just coming into view, and I foresaw how it would look

and roll along, and prepared to be pleased. Just such a piece of art merely, though infinitely sweet and grand, did it appear to me, and just as little were any active duties required of me. (*JT*, 11: 67-68)

While the 1851 journal entry is all about the two moving panoramas Thoreau viewed, the above 1858 journal entry uses the reference to the panorama in order to compare it with his spectatorship toward the November twilights. Given that Thoreau in the 1858 journal entry uses his spectatorship at the actual panorama exhibition to compare it with his spectatorship of landscape in the natural world, this supports my assumption that Thoreau's description of Concord's landscape in "Civil Disobedience" is an allusion to his previous experience of attending at the panorama exhibition. In both the former (the 1858 journal entry) and the latter (the description of Concord's scenery in "Civil Disobedience"), Thoreau's actual experience as a spectator at the moving panorama exhibition is used to express his feelings about the defamiliarization of the landscape that exists in his real life and has been familiar to him. In "Civil Disobedience," Thoreau's "involuntary" (3) position as a spectator of Concord landscape is allusively compared to passive spectatorship at the panorama exhibition. In the same way, in the 1858 journal entry, Thoreau's spectatorship of the November twilights is compared to his experience as a spectator at the panorama exhibition, in which "little were any active duties required of me" (*JT*, 11: 67-68).

The significance of the reference to the panorama in the 1858 journal entry is more than its connection to the 1851 journal entry and the prison scene in "Civil Disobedience." In the lines following the part quoted above, Thoreau associates the

feeling of defamiliarization with a sense of doubleness in his spectatorship of the November twilight with its comparison to spectatorship at the panorama exhibition.

Thoreau continues to write:

We are independent o[f] all that we see. The hangman whom I have *seen* cannot hang me. The earth which I have *seen* cannot bury me. Such doubleness and distance does sight prove. . . . You cannot see anything until you are clear of it. . . . had I not seen all this before! What new sweet was I to extract from it? . . . Yet I sat the bench with perfect contentment, unwilling to exchange the familiar vision that was to be unrolled for any treasure or heaven that could be imagined. . . . That we may behold the panorama with this slight improvement or change, this is what we sustain life for with so much effort from year to year. (*JT*, 11: 68)

No matter how familiar and verisimilar the painted landscape in a moving panorama can be to a panorama spectator, the spectator is separated from what he views. The same sense of “doubleness” is true for Thoreau as a spectator of the landscape in the real world. Like Emerson and Kant, Thoreau agrees with the idea of subjective vision, which posits that “we” (observers) are separated and independent from “all that we see.” At the same time, however, unlike Emerson, Thoreau cannot give up his passion for material nature. Thoreau is so preoccupied with “the familiar vision unrolled” to him that he refuses to exchange it for “any treasure or heaven” (*JT*, 11: 68).

Notes

1. See Oettermann 6-7.

2. Ibid., 6.

3. See chapter 2 of this dissertation.

4. In “Democratic Vistas,” Whitman writes, “Far, far, indeed, stretch, in distance, our Vistas!” (956).

5. As the byproducts of antebellum America’s imperialistic expansion, both slave ships and whale ships contributed to maintain and control the nation’s aggrandized territory and increased population.

6. Louisa May Alcott Alcott’s references to the panorama and the panoramic vision in *Moods*, although it was written in 1864 and beyond the scope of my dissertation that focuses on the antebellum American literature, is noteworthy, especially given her allusions to Emerson and Thoreau. In chapter 3 “Afloat,” Sylvia romanticizes her river voyage with her brother Mark and two main male characters—Geoffrey Moor based on Emerson and Adam Warwick based on Thoreau— by comparing it to her experience of watching a “Panorama” (33). In chapter 20 “Come,” Alcott first aestheticizes masculine power and violence in her support for the Italian Revolution and then warns against the danger of misusing them. In Alcott’s depiction of her male protagonist Adam Warwick’s participation in the revolution through the villagers’ voices, Warwick is idealized as a superhuman war hero and a patron saint for the Italian convent, which was both hospital and refuge for women and children, the sick, the wounded, and

the old. However, in his own explanation of his experience after their eventual reunion with Moor, Warwick confesses that he enjoyed the violent act of killing enemy soldiers.

7. In the first chapter, when she arrives at Niagara Falls, she is thrilled with the expectation of seeing with her own eyes the sublime scenery. Since she has gained sufficient knowledge about Niagara Falls and other tourist attractions from her experience of viewing “drawings, the panorama, &c.” and her research on the Great Lakes in the library of Harvard College, she has full confidence in herself as a tourist: She says, “I knew where to look for everything, and everything looked as I thought it would” (4). However, from the pre-conditioned viewpoints, she only feels “a strange indifference about seeing the aspiration of [her] life’s hopes” (8). She eventually finds herself “feeling most moved” and experiencing the “overpower[ing]” and “choking” emotion of sublimity “in the wrong place” (8). In addition, while she struggles to locate the picturesque scenery that she read in the travelogues and saw in the panorama, Fuller begins to renounce her original detached position of objectifying nature and people into a spectacle for aesthetic pleasure and sympathizes not only with the pain of an eagle “chained for a plaything” (6) but also with human victims such as white frontier women and American Indians.

8. See Warren 145, 160.

9. See “The Still Small Voice” and “Leta: A Sketch from Life” in *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio, Series One* (1853); “Steamboat Sights and Reflections,” “City Scenes and City Life: Number Three,” and “Opening of the Crystal Palace” in *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio, Series Two* (1854); and “The Brother’s Window by

Gaslight” and “A Deep through My Quizzing Glass” in *Little Ferns for Fanny's Little Friends* (1854).

10. Reynolds asserts that Hawthorne’s “aversion to violence, social unrest, moral absolutism and faulty perception,” as well as “his habitual assumption of the perspectives of different persons (essential to the craft of fiction)” (64), only made him “more and more at odds with his absolutist contemporaries, who professed to have direct access to the will of God” (42) and also “enabled him to appreciate multiple points of view in the midst of partisan propaganda and radical violence” (64).

11. Concerning Goethe’s effort to combine Kant’s idealism with contemporary empirical sciences, Crary says, “What is important about Goethe’s account of subjective vision is the inseparability of two models usually presented as distinct and irreconcilable: a physiological observer who will be described in increasing detail by the empirical sciences in the nineteenth century, and an observer posited by various ‘romanticisms’ and early modernisms as the active, autonomous producer of his or her own visual experience” (69).

12. Crary writes, “most important is [Goethe’s] designation of opacity as a crucial and productive component of vision” (71). Also, according to Crary, “Shopenhauer’s importance here lies in the very modernity of the observer he describes, and at the same time in the ambiguity of that observer” (75).

13. Although Reynolds focuses on the biographical circumstance of Hawthorne’s rivalry with Emerson for Hawthorne’s wife Sophia Peabody, this does not exclude the possibility that, from Schopenhauer, the panorama literature, and the empirical studies of

subjective vision, Hawthorne found some theories, literary conventions, and scientific studies to overcome and undermine Emerson's transcendental idealism.

14. As mentioned in the introduction, the moving panorama fever in America reached its summit during the late 1840s and 1850s.

15. See also Weinstein 134.

16. For example, see William D. T. Travis's *Panorama of the Union Army of the Cumberland* (1865), Paul Dominique Philippoteaux's *Panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg* (1883), and Thomas Clarkson Gordon's *Battle Scenes of The Rebellion* (1884-1886).

17. As Davis also points out, Hawthorne "not only created the voice of an indignant editor to harass the author from the footnotes, but he likewise dramatized the differences between the bellicose rhetoric of the notes and the sometimes dreamy detachment of the 'Peaceful Man'" (102).

18. *The Devil upon Crutches*, Tobias Smollett's English translation of Le Sage's *Le diable boiteux*, was published in London in 1750.

19. See Benjamin 68-69.

20. See Moldenhauer 239.

21. As Moldenhauer indicates, the two paragraphs about his attendance at the moving panorama exhibition in his 1851 journal entry were "incorporated into 'The Wild,' a lecture Thoreau was composing at the time and eventually published as 'Walking'" (239). See Thoreau's "Walking" (201-202) in *Excursions*.

22. As for Thoreau's explanation of his attendance at two exhibitions of moving panoramas in a journal entry in 1851, see Thoreau's *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, Journal*, vol. 3. 181-82.

23. See Crary 61.

24. On the correspondence between subject and object in Lockean empiricism and Goethe's and Schopenhauer's rejection of it, see Crary 74-75.

4. THE EXPANSION OF MASCULINITY:

MISSISSIPPI PANORAMAS AND BLACK ABOLITIONIST PANORAMAS

The moving panorama was one of the most popular forms of landscape painting in mid-nineteenth-century America. In contrast to the popularity of circular panoramas on the European continent, the United States observed a phenomenal success of the moving panorama. The American preference for moving panoramas was caused by the material conditions of the nation as well as Americans' optical and geographical notions of nature and landscape. Practically, moving panoramas were more profitable in America due to a more diffuse population and fewer metropolitan cities than Europe. While circular or static panoramas required the construction of permanent rotunda buildings, moving panoramas were transportable and easier to set up for display—they could show in any conventional hall or theater, on riverboats, or even outdoors. In addition, as a combination of a virtual tour and a mass form of landscape painting whose length generally reached from hundreds of feet to half a mile, the moving panorama was considered one of the most effective media to satiate the desire for uniting the disparate sections into the national whole.¹ The moving panorama was more adequate to Americans' visual and dimensional conceptions of the vast expanse of American landscape than the circular panorama, whose representation is incapable of movement and temporality and confined to the limit of eyesight.² Due to the success of the moving panorama in America and its match with the American faith in "Manifest Destiny"—the jingoistic tenet that America's territorial expansion and historical progress are destined

by a higher power— some historians wrongly regarded the moving panorama as an American invention.³ However, the moving panorama first appeared in London in the early nineteenth century as a scenic device for pantomimes and theatrical plays.⁴

After importing the moving panorama, American panoramists created its two subgenres: the Mississippi panorama and the anti-slavery panorama. Marketed and consumed as emblems of national expansionism and historical progress, Mississippi panoramas played the leading part in the moving panorama fever in America during the late 1840s and 1850s. They served to justify the imperialistic territorial aggrandizement of the nation and idealize the wild frontier in its contrast to the cultivated and domesticated pastoral of the old continent. In 1850, two moving panoramas appeared — Henry Box Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* and William Wells Brown's *Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave*— and they opened up another new American subgenre of the moving panorama, the anti-slavery panorama.⁵ Countering the romanticized representation of slavery in the dominant convention of the Mississippi panorama, these two black abolitionists appropriated the popular genre of the moving panorama and created a new convention, the anti-slavery panorama.

This chapter explores the tension beneath the popularity of the moving panoramas in antebellum America by focusing on the supremacy of white masculinity in Mississippi panoramas and black masculinity in the two black abolitionist panoramas. Although there has been a considerable amount of research done on social and political conflicts over American expansionism and slavery surrounding Mississippi panoramas and anti-slavery panoramas, scant scholarly attention has been paid to the significance of

masculinity in their conflicts. I argue that these two American subgenres of the moving panorama feature different constructions of masculinity as key points in their debates on, and different attitudes toward, the American landscape, slavery, and the nation's expansion.

This chapter is indebted to several studies on the American landscape and painting. A brief examination of these studies helps to situate my research in relation to existing scholarship in art history, American studies, and antebellum American literature. During the 1980s and 1990s, studies on American landscape painting of the nineteenth century achieved two interrelated but distinct movements from their predecessors. In her 1980 book titled *Nature and Culture: American Landscape Painting, 1825-1875*, Barbara Novak abandoned the traditional method of cataloguing painters and summarizing their biographies and artistic contributions and achievement. She reexamined nineteenth-century American landscape painting within its contemporary cultural context, which includes "philosophical, religious, literary, scientific, and social" matters (vii). Following the publication of Novak's groundbreaking work, more scholarly attention has been paid to the social and political function of the American landscape and visual and verbal representations of it for the formation of national identity against the backdrop of the nation's massive expansion, a doubling in size during the first half of nineteenth century.

The second movement in art history started around the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this period, post-colonialist discourse was at its peak⁶ and most Humanities scholars came to generally agree that "Manifest Destiny" should be

understood as “a historical artifact” constructed for the justification of the nation’s imperialistic expansion rather than as “an interpretive theme” (Joy xxix). Accordingly, studies on the landscape genre have become more sensitive to the imperialistic aspects of American expansionism. One of the first studies that pioneered this movement in art history was Angela Miller’s *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875* (1993). Miller’s study starts with her realization that previous scholars tend to have defensive attitudes toward American expansionism and take for granted the nationalist function of the American landscape. Against this tendency, Miller defines the American landscape as a “problematic” and “fragile” concept and carefully analyzes the ways in which the representation of it was “politically charged and contested” (1-4). For example, she explores the tensions surrounding the ironical concept of the Hudson River School, which originally called attention to the “provinciality and aesthetic parochialism” of the painters, but later came to signify the first “national school” of American landscape art (Miller, *The Empire of the Eye* 3-4).⁷

Influenced by these new tendencies in other disciplines, recent studies in nineteenth-century American literature refuse to accept as unproblematic the association between the American landscape and nationalist expansionism and focus on what previous studies have neglected to examine, especially social and political conflicts between contenders with different political and ideological positions toward the formation of the national landscape. In *Rivers of Dreams: Imagining the Mississippi before Mark Twain* (2007), Thomas Ruys Smith explores complicated and constantly changing meanings of the Mississippi river in antebellum American history—such as

“connective tissue, borderline, and crossing point; a channel of slavery and a path to freedom; a lonely wilderness for explorers and the setting for a fashionable tour; a pastoral paradise and an industrial powerhouse; a place of salvation, and a notorious underworld” (3). Smith’s book consists of five chapters and they epitomize how the political and cultural tensions had been built around the river: Thomas Jefferson’s imperial vision and his transformation of the river into an American river in the early post-Revolution years; the river as a frontier of a growing nation in connection to the rise of Andrew Jackson; the accounts of the river’s practical and symbolic meanings in the Jacksonian America by travelers and writers such as Frances Trollope, Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Frederick Marryat, and Harriet Martineau; the industrialization of the river and its social and economic development in the post-Jackson years; and the dark images of slavery and crimes in the late antebellum period.

Another recent study in nineteenth-century American literature that focuses on the sociopolitical tensions surrounding the connection between national expansionism and the American landscape is Anne Baker’s *Heartless Immensity: Literature, Culture, and Geography in Antebellum America* (2006). Baker explores two contrasting responses in antebellum America to the geographical and psychological uncertainty that lurk beneath the nationalist optimism about expansion through the annexation of vast new territories and different ethnic groups. For some people, the sense of unease and fear about the nation’s formlessness caused anti-expansionist sentiments and preferences for a “compact” nation. As Lyman Beecher, father of Harriet Beecher Stowe, warned in 1819, “the extension of our agricultural territory is itself a national evil” (2-3), which

was no exaggeration since it necessitated and justified the greater national evil, slavery. For others, the fluctuation of the nation's territorial and cultural boundaries engendered urgent demand for artists to contrive new forms and adapt older conventions as tools to construct national identity through the visual representation of the nation's nature.⁸

With regard to the latter response of requesting a new representational form for the American landscape, the middle decades of the nineteenth century observed two interrelated phenomena, both of which are the most significant events in the history of American landscape genre. First, the moving panorama fever swept the American public in the mid-nineteenth century. American river panoramas and polar-sea moving panoramas served to satisfy Americans' territorial curiosity which extended beyond continental limits into islands such as Cuba and Hawaii and even the North pole. Second, the Hudson River School grew into the first national school of American landscape painting during the same period, which would have been impossible without the influence of the panorama on the painting style of the artists in the school. Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School, opened a new paradigm of landscape painting that Wolfgang Born terms the "panoramic style" (38). Cole's panoramic style is characterized by narrative landscape series, the traveler-artist persona, and the wide-angle format of the paintings to represent the panoramic view of landscape. In his 1947 book, *Still-life Painting in America*, Born argues that Cole was the first artist that applied the illusionistic technology of the panorama to landscape painting (38). As Alan Wallach points out in a 1993 essay titled "Making a Picture of the View from Mount Holyoke," despite the centrality of Cole's *The Oxbow* (1836) to the recent studies on the

school, “surprisingly little has been written about its paradigmatic qualities or its defining role” in establishing the panoramic style of the Hudson River School.

Distancing from Born’s argument on the one-sided influence of the panorama on Cole and the Hudson River School, Wallach rediscovers the significance of Cole’s *The Oxbow* and *The Course of Empire* (1836) as evidence of the historical process forming the panoramic mode in terms of a broader context of “panoramic phenomenon,” which encompassed “the dynamics of a complex set of interrelated, and mutually reinforcing, cultural practices” such as circular panoramas, moving panoramas, landscape tourism, and panoramic literature (81).

Together with the “mutually reinforcing” relation between these cultural artifacts, however, there were much deeper tensions surrounding the social and political implications of the panorama in mid-nineteenth-century America. Black abolitionists such as Box Brown, Wells Brown, and James Presley Ball understood the influential power of the Mississippi River panoramas on the American public as political propaganda to justify and idealize the nation’s expansion and historical progress by romanticizing slavery and erasing its cruel realities. Rather than simply denouncing these expansionist panoramas as accomplices to the evil of slavery, they appropriated the “subversive possibilities” of the panorama (which was the first visual mass medium for the rising middle class in Europe) for politically revisionist ends (Miller, “The Panorama” 59). As scholars such as Michael A. Chaney, Daphne A. Brooks, and Jeffrey Ruggles have shown, eschewing and transgressing the dominant conventions of river panoramas that confirmed and reinforced white Northern travellers’ romanticized and

detached views on slavery, Wells Brown and Box Brown transformed the popular genre of the moving panorama into anti-slavery propaganda.

Just as most recent scholars in gender studies agree with the idea of masculinity and femininity as social constructions rather than innate characteristics of men and women, these studies invariably emphasize how verbal and visual representations of the nation's nature served to construct the social and political implications of landscape, expansionism, and slavery. Building upon these existing studies, this chapter demonstrates how the Mississippi panorama and the anti-slavery panorama participate in the process of contesting their contemporary socio-political agendas such as the American landscape, American expansionism, and slavery through their different constructions of masculinity.

In the first section of this chapter, I explore how John Banvard, the originator of the Mississippi panorama,⁹ constructs his masculine persona as a national hero who creates a national painting that is grand and large enough to represent the grandeur and extent of the nation's landscape. The second section examines the ways in which Banvard's panorama romanticizes slavery as an object of sightseeing and invalidates black patriarchy in order to justify the supremacy of white masculinity in the nation's expansion and historical progress. In the third and fourth sections, I analyze the reconstruction of black masculinity in two black abolitionist panoramas, Box Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* (1850), and Wells Brown's *Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave* (1850).

4.1. The Construction of American Masculinity in Banvard's Mississippi Panorama

America's fervor for moving panoramas was at its peak from the late 1840s through 1850s when the panoramas of the Mississippi river were enormously successful. In his *Examiner* article entitled "The American Panorama" on December 16, 1848, Charles Dickens appreciated *Banvard's Geographical Panorama of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers* as "a truly American idea" (qtd. in Oettermann 329).¹⁰ Promoting the contemporary notions of the Mississippi river as "the bond of union to all the states" (qtd. in Baker 76)¹¹ and as "the American Nile" (Smith 2), Mississippi panoramas visually represented America's expanding geography as a coherent entity that united disparate regions including newly and soon-to-be annexed territories. Also, the pamphlets that accompanied Mississippi panoramas often praised the annexation of new territory as the culminating moment in the nation's progress.¹² For example, in his 1855 pamphlet for *William H. Powell's Historical Picture of the Discovery of the Mississippi by DeSoto, A. D. 1541 Painted by Order of the United States Government for the Rotunda of the National Capitol*, art critic Henri Stuart associates the Spanish conquest of the Americas with the Texas War of Independence and the Mexican-American War in order to situate them into the long narrative of Manifest Destiny.¹³

The success of Mississippi panoramas was phenomenal, as were the number of visitors and the amount of money earned, especially considering the contemporary population: in 1850, there were 136,881 people living in Boston and 515,547 in New York.¹⁴ Banvard's Mississippi panorama that was first presented in Louisville,

Kentucky in October 1846 earned two hundred thousand dollars from more than four hundred thousand viewers in America alone: 251,702 visitors in Boston and 175,890 in New York.¹⁵ William Burr's *Moving Mirror of the Lakes, the Niagara, St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers* outdid Banvard's in terms of length as well as popularity. In New York where it was first exhibited on September 18, 1849, two hundred performances were shown to more than two hundred thousand people within four months; in Boston, the first stop on its tour, it recorded a total of one million audience members at one thousand performances in sixteen months; in all, there were two million visitors.¹⁶

Some critics doubt the credibility of these numbers since competition among panorama proprietors often brought out their exaggerated claims on the length of the canvas or on the expense to produce the panorama. For instance, as Joseph J. Moldenhauer asserts, Burr's panorama, which was advertised as "seven-mile mirror," was about half a mile (Moldenhauer 229). Also, although Burr claimed that he expended over \$30,000 to produce it, it may have included the cost used for the exhibition (Moldenhauer 238). However, given the enterprise value of Burr's panorama, the number of visitors to Burr's panorama in Boston and New York may have been not that much exaggerated. The total value of the prizes in a giant lottery offered to visitors who paid one dollar for an admission ticket rather than the normal price of 25 cents, was almost \$100,000. The prizes included 53,737 panorama pamphlets—cheap printed materials that accompanied the viewing of panoramas—worth 12.5 cents each, 40,000 engravings valued at 25 cents apiece, 6,100 gold pens and pencils valued at \$8,500 in total, 100 hats worth \$400, 50 gold watches valued at a total of \$3,000, a \$1,500 trotter,

a 120-acre farm outside of Philadelphia worth \$24,000, and the grand prize, the St. Lawrence panorama itself worth \$40,000.¹⁷ In addition, an incredibly great number of total visitors to Burr's panorama in Boston, almost ten times of the city's whole population, can be explained by Burr and his partner Josiah Perham's promotion scheme. For example, in cooperation with the New England railroads, Burr and Perham offered a half-price group tour package deal that combined the physical tour between Boston and Montreal and Quebec in Canada and the virtual tour to Burr's moving panorama.¹⁸

Another marketing strategy of Mississippi panoramas, which this chapter intends to focus on, was an appeal to the public's nationalist sentiments for the masculinity of the American landscape. In fact, the construction of American masculinity in its association with the nation's landscape was not limited to the special genre of the Mississippi panorama, but was more widely demanded throughout the nineteenth century for two reasons. First, the demand for constructing masculinity through the American frontier corresponded with the increasing anxieties of nineteenth-century American males about the "control of mainstream culture" as "the stronger sex" over the increased power of women in the public sphere, including education, business, politics, and movements for social reform and women's rights (Prechal 188). Contemporary science such as Darwin's theory of evolution fueled the association of civilization with femininity and domesticity and, accordingly, the possible threat from an effeminate civilization increased the desire for a "primitive" masculinity in its connection to the "primitive" frontier.¹⁹

Second, various nineteenth-century artists and intellectuals participated in the nationalist project of redefining the American landscape as “the hallmark of America’s authenticity and power” that signified the nation’s “creative potential and moral superiority” over the effeminate civilization and the cultivated pastoral in Europe and Britain (Cohen 73). Hudson River School painters such as Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, Frederick Edwin Church, and Frederick Jackson Turner depicted the wild American nature as vaster, purer, and more masculine than the conventionally settled and cultivated landscape of Europe. Also, as Beth L. Lueck explores in *American Writers and the Picturesque Tour: The Search for National Identity, 1790-1860*, almost every literary writer in the first half of the nineteenth century—including Charles Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Huntly* (1799), James Kirke Paulding’s satires on British tourism in the 1820s and 1830s, and Edgar Allan Poe’s parodies of the British picturesque tradition genre in the 1840s—joined in the development of the American picturesque tour and transformed the British convention of the picturesque tour into “a means of expressing their nationalistic sentiments” and “shaping the literature of the new nation” (Lueck 4-5).²⁰ Especially, writers such as Washington Irving, Francis Parkman, James Fenimore Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Walt Whitman contributed to the construction of American masculinity and national identity through the American landscape.²¹

Contrary to these painters’ and writers’ works most of which have survived to the present, most of moving panoramas became ragged and tattered over the course of hundreds of presentations in exhibition tours to major cities in United States and Europe

and, regrettably, do not exist any longer. Panorama pamphlets, program booklets that accompanied the exhibitions of these now lost panoramas, however, exist and provide the written descriptions of the lost panoramas.

Pamphlets for Mississippi panoramas demonstrate how panorama artists self-fashioned themselves into national heroes who sacrificed themselves for the national art that represented the America's vast and masculine landscape. Typical British panorama pamphlets in the 1830s and 1840s were twelve to sixteen pages long, consisting of three sections: three or four pages of introduction, seven-to-eight-page description of the scenes in the panorama, and a foldout sketch of the panorama. In contrast, American pamphlets in the late 1840s and 1850s were more elaborate and longer, adding a new section on biographical sketches of the panorama artist or other important figures who were relevant to the region represented in the panorama.²² The new convention of American panorama pamphlets was established by pamphlets for Banvard's panorama whose great popularity and financial success stimulated competitors to paint different versions of Mississippi panoramas. There were at least three versions of the pamphlet for Banvard's panorama and, despite some differences among them, they commonly present at the beginning a dozen-page biographical section titled "Adventures of the Artist."²³ Quoted with minor changes in newspapers and later developed into a biographical sketch titled *Banvard; or the Adventures of an Artist* (1849, 1852), "Adventures of the Artist" creates the prototype of the American panorama artist as a masculine national hero, who becomes a main element in other Mississippi panoramas.²⁴

In Banvard's pamphlet titled *Description of Banvard's Panorama of the Mississippi River* (1847), "Adventures of the Artist" starts with an emphasis on Banvard's lack of manliness was when he was young. The pamphlet reads:

[Banvard] became quite an accomplished draughtsman while yet a mere boy. . . . he sometimes would be in his room projecting some instrument of natural science—a camera obscura, or solar microscope. He once came very near losing his eye sight, by the explosion of a glass receiver, in which he was collecting hydrogen gas. His room was quite a laboratory and museum. He constructed a respectable diorama of the sea, having moving boats, fish, and a naval engagement. He saved the pennies that were given him, and bought some types, and made a wooden printing press, and printed some hand-bills for his juvenile exhibition. We have one of them now in our possession, and it is quite a genteel specimen of typography. (3)

As the pamphlet demonstrates, from his childhood, Banvard evinced a talent for drawing and painting and an early passion for natural science, exhibition, and printing. Although all these childhood amusements would later become a seedbed for his production of the first Mississippi panorama, they resulted in his "delicate health" because "while his more favored brothers were in the open air at play," he confined himself "in-doors much of his time" (3).

A severe reversal of fortunes in his family caused Banvard to launch his boating adventure to "the West" at the age of fifteen (4). Growing out of effeminacy in his

childhood, Banvard struggled bravely against adverse situations. For example, when a terrific storm lashed the river during the night, “our young adventurer, at the hazard of his own life, saved the life of one of his comrades who fell overboard” (5). Also, Banvard and his comrades courageously defeated an attack by “a party of the Murell robbers, a large organized banditti, who infested the country for miles around” even when he “came near losing his life” due to several pistol shots that missed him by just a few inches (8).

While Banvard’s adventure on the Mississippi river turned him into a manly man, it was his grand project of painting the first Mississippi panorama that reincarnated him into a national hero. While observing the panoramic view of the Mississippi from the boat floating down the river, Banvard remembered reading some foreign writers’ assertions, that “America had no artists commensurate with the grandeur and extent of her scenery” (9). The pamphlet continues to identify patriotism as Banvard’s motivation behind his decision to commence his project for the largest painting that had ever been created until then: “The idea of gain never entered his mind when he commenced the undertaking, but he was actuated by a patriotic and honorable ambition, that America should produce the *largest painting* in the world” (Italics original 9).

As shown in this quote, the pamphlet underscores the purity of Banvard’s patriotic motivation by differentiating it from a more commercially driven entrepreneurial ambition. In fact, however, the appeal to the public’s patriotic sentiments and the emphasis on the size of the panorama were essential parts of the marketing strategy for Banvard’s panorama. Advertisements and review articles in

periodicals as well as panorama handbills not only labeled Banvard's panorama as "great national painting," but they also emphasized both the length of the panorama and that of the river landscape by calling the former "a three-mile panorama" representing "3,000 miles" of the latter (Baker 66; Smith 1, 111-112; McDermott 33).

A more explicit appeal to the nationalist feelings towards America's masculine landscape is clearly presented in another version of Banvard's pamphlet titled *Banvard's Geographical Panorama of the Mississippi River, with the Story of Mike Fink, the Last of the Boatmen, a Tale of River Life* (1847). This version indicates that Banvard's goal was "to produce for his country *the largest painting in the world* [. . .] which should be as superior to all other, in point of *size*, as that prodigious river is superior to the streamlets of Europe, a gigantic idea!" (qtd. in Baker 77). The pamphlet effectively promotes Banvard as a national hero by extending the correspondence between the panorama and the nation's nature in terms of their grand sizes into Banvard who created the panorama. Commensurate with the sizes of the panorama and the American landscape, Banvard's idea of creating the first Mississippi panorama was "gigantic" because it aimed to prove the superiority of the nation's masculine landscape over the effeminacy of Europe's nature symbolized by "streamlets."

To further substantiate the greatness and masculinity of Banvard as a national hero, different versions of the pamphlet for his Mississippi panorama invariably emphasize Banvard's valor and perseverance in hardship that he encountered when he traveled alone in an open skiff down the river and spent over four hundred days making

preparatory drawings. For example, “Adventures of the Artist” in Banvard’s

Description describes:

[H]is hands became hardened with constantly plying the oar, and his skin as tawny as an Indian’s, from exposure to the rays of the sun and the vicissitudes of the weather. He would be weeks together without speaking to a human being, having no other company than his rifle, which furnished him with his meat from the game of the woods or the fowls of the river. [. . .] Having finished his lonely meal, he would roll himself in his blanket, creep under his frail skiff, which he turned over to shield him from the night dews. (9-10)

The wild nature turned an effeminate boy of “delicate health” into the embodiment of American frontier masculinity. The description of Banvard’s life on the Mississippi in this quote epitomizes the traditional agreement of the American West men, which was promoted by early-nineteenth-century frontier novels. For example, as D. H. Lawrence points out in *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), the Leatherstocking tales by James Fenimore Cooper from the 1820s through 1840s characterized his frontier hero Natty Bumppo as “uncouth,” “half-civilized,” and “stoic” hunters and “pathfinder[s]” who “kill . . . only to live” and “live by his gun . . . in the wild” frontier (58-69). Except the difference between Banvard’s ride on the skiff and Natty Bumppo’s life in the wild woods, all these stereotypical characteristics of American frontier men fit Banvard’s image portrayed in the pamphlet. In addition, the pamphlet valorizes Banvard’s heroic bravery and determination in courageously confronting fatal disasters. Banvard did not

give up his travel for preparatory labor even after several stormy nights during which Banvard had to “sit all night on a log and breast the pelting storm” in order to escape the falling trees and collapsing riverbanks (10). Even when the yellow fever was rampaging in New Orleans, Banvard was “unmindful of that” and entered the city and made his drawings of its landscape. The scorching rays of the sun could not stop him from his “constant and extraordinary efforts” which resulted in an unrecoverable damage to his eyesight as well as a severe sunburn: his skin “peeled from off the back of his hands, and from his face” (10).

In spite of its earlier emphasis on the purity of Banvard’s patriotic motivation for his project of the Mississippi panorama, “Adventures of the Artist” ends with Banvard’s commercial success and the monetary rewards that compensate his perseverance and sacrifice in his efforts to bring honor to his country. The pamphlet even provides the information on the money that he earned from the exhibitions in the first city, Louisville: on the second night of the exhibition, Banvard received “the enormous sum of *ten dollars*”: eventually, “The great painter left the city with a few thousand dollars” (*Italics original*, 14). The pamphlet continues to inform that the ongoing exhibitions in Boston attract “admiring thousands” so far and even forecast the success of the future exhibitions in next cities: “the enterprising artist is deservedly reaping a golden harvest” (14).

Right before the last section of Banvard’s pamphlet, a letter from Lieutenant S. Woodworth is inserted. The letter’s stress on the great value of the panorama effectively bridges the gap between the major part of the pamphlet and its last section: the former on

Banvard's pure patriotism and masculine perseverance in the production of the panorama and the latter on monetary rewards from the exhibitions of the panorama.

Visiting Banvard's studio—"an immense wooden building," constructed for the purpose of exhibiting his moving panorama—at the moment of completing the painting and furnishing mechanical instruments including the immense cylinders that wind up the finished sections of the painting, Woodworth examines the portion on which Banvard is engaged (12). Surprised at the unexpected greatness of Banvard's panorama,

Woodworth confesses, "Any description of this gigantic undertaking that I should attempt in a letter, would convey but a faint idea of what it will be when completed"

(12). Stimulating future spectators' curiosity about the panorama, Woodworth appreciates its artistic and historical values: "The remarkable truthfulness of the minutest objects upon the shores of the rivers, independent of the masterly style, and artistical execution of the work, will make it the most valuable historical painting in the world"

(12). Based on his observation of the painting and conversation with Banvard, Woodworth also defines Banvard as "the artist, who is engaged in the herculean task of painting a panorama of the Mississippi river, upon more than *three miles of canvas!*"

(11). Through the allusion to the Greek mythic hero Hercules and the emphasis on the length of the canvas, this short description encapsulates the pamphlet's marketing strategy of idealizing the panorama artist's heroic masculinity in creating the largest painting in the world to represent America's vast and masculine landscape.

4.2. The Romanticization of Slavery in Banvard's *Description*

Mississippi panoramas often promoted their accurate representation of the American landscape, including even the minutest objects, as their foremost strength. For example, in October 1846, when the opening exhibition of Banvard's panorama in Louisville turned out to be a disaster—there was no one to come and see the panorama—the first marketing strategy that Banvard employed was to advertise testimonials from experienced river boatmen about how true to nature his painting was. By the last day of the month, using free tickets, Banvard succeeded in having ten captains, ten pilots, and more than a hundred other boatmen testify before the mayor of Louisville about the truthfulness of his painting, which generated momentum for attracting people's attention.²⁵ Later pamphlets included these testimonials and once “the public became convinced that his picture was worth looking at,” they rushed to see the panorama “by hundreds” (“Adventures of the Artist” 14). Banvard's successful use of the testimonials influenced other rival panoramas of the Mississippi and eventually established boatmen's testimonies as a conventional feature of the Mississippi panorama pamphlets.

In spite of all the testimonials about their representational accuracy, the depictions of slavery in Banvard's panorama and other Mississippi panoramas were deemed to be untruthful by fugitive slaves such as William Wells Brown. On a day in autumn 1847, Brown attended an exhibition of “a Panorama of the River Mississippi” in Boston and was surprised at the unfair and untruthful representation of slavery in the panorama (*Description* 3). The panorama that Brown saw must have been Banvard's

Mississippi panorama since it had unprecedented success in Boston throughout the year of 1847 and other major rival panoramas' exhibitions in Boston were not held in the same year.²⁶

The favorable treatment of slavery was not an idiosyncratic characteristic of typical Mississippi panoramas. As cultural and political propaganda to praise America's expansion and historical progress, Mississippi panoramas followed the American picturesque convention that confirmed and reinforced Northerners' romanticized and detached views on slavery. In the tradition of the English picturesque, a male tourist was supposed to objectify the landscape and "other" people such as gypsies and peasants into the spectacle and to reorganize them to fit into his pre-conditioned visual formula. By substituting Native Americans and slaves for gypsies and English peasants, nineteenth-century American portrayals in travel writings and landscape paintings aestheticized them as the objects of sightseeing within the spectacle of American wilderness and plantations.²⁷

It is impossible to see with our own eyes how unfair the visual representation of slavery in the typical Mississippi panoramas was. None of them has survived to the present day, except one, John J. Egan's *Panorama of the Monumental Grandeur of the Mississippi Valley* (1850), whose main theme is Native Americans' rituals and habitat. Although Egan's panorama includes an interesting scene in which a group of African Americans work in unison, it is not a slave plantation but the excavation of an indigenous burial mound that the scene represents. Egan's racial composition of the triangular division—Native American skeletons buried in the mound, black men

scattered around the mound and digging up the remains, and two white-suited men at the center— faithfully follows the genre conventions of the American picturesque such as the centralization of white male artists, travellers, or explorers and their perspective as the target of identification for spectators and the objectification of African Americans and Native Americans, who are turned into parts of the spectacle. However, it is not certain that the African American workers in Egan’s panorama are slaves or freemen since the absence of overseers and whips opens up a possibility of “volitional participation of the black labor” (Chaney 117-18).

Although there remains no material evidence for the visual representation of slavery in Mississippi panoramas, some panorama pamphlets provide the written description of the painted scenes on slavery. As pamphlets indicate, Mississippi panoramas often erase slave figures from the idealized American landscape and, even when they represent southern slave plantations, they objectify slaves through a white male traveller/panoramist’s romanticized view of the South. In Banvard’s *Description*, out of thirty-two scenes in total that are described in the twelve-page section titled “The Panorama,” only three scenes briefly deal with the subject of slavery. The slave pastoral begins at the entry titled “President’s Island” which says:

A large and beautiful island, which divides the river just below. Here the voyager will begin to see fine cotton plantations, with the slaves working in the cotton fields. He will see the beautiful mansions of the planters, rows of “negro quarters,” and lofty cypress trees, the pride of the Southern forests. . . . (27)

Spectators are supposed to identify with the Northern male voyager before whose eyes the romantic landscape of the “beautiful” island passes. As he zooms in to examine details in the scenery, he recognizes slave workers in cotton fields, but he regards them as components in the scene of “fine” cotton plantations rather than sympathizing with the hardship of their condition. The panorama also aestheticizes “negro quarters” as picturesque objects by juxtaposing them with other tourist attractions such as the planters’ “beautiful” mansions and the backdrop of the cypress, “the pride of the Southern forests.”

Another entry on slave plantations “Baton Rouge” resonates with “President’s Island” by repeating the same strategy of including slave cabins in the list of sightseeing objects for romantic tourism. The second half of the entry describes the scene of sugar plantations in the panorama:

From Baton Rouge, the river below to New Orleans, is lined with splendid sugar plantations, and what is generally termed the “Coast,”—a strip of land on either side of the river extending back to the cypress swamps, about two miles. [. . .] This coast is protected from inundations by an embankment of earth of six or eight feet in height, called a levee. Behind the levee, we see extensive sugar fields, noble mansions, beautiful gardens, large sugar houses, groups of negro quarters, lofty churches, splendid villas [. . .] (31)

The ekphrastic description in “Baton Rouge” more explicitly annotates the panorama’s objectification of slave plantations as romantic scenery by incorporating the three

aesthetic ideals of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape painting: the picturesque, the beautiful, and the sublime. The entry describes how the panorama places the picturesque view of “negro quarters” side by side with the “beautiful” images of “noble mansions, [. . .] gardens, [and] splendid villas” and the sublime of “lofty churches” and “sugar fields” extending “about two miles” (31). After cataloguing all these tourist attractions, the pamphlet admires the whole scene of sugar plantations as “one of the finest views of country to be met in the United States” (31).

Banvard’s pamphlet also demonstrates how the panorama further romanticizes the scenes of slavery by juxtaposing them with scenes depicting the romantic history of America. The scene of sugar plantations in “Baton Rouge” follows the scene of Prophet’s Island named in memoriam of “Wotongo, an Indian prophet—the last of his tribe” (30). The pamphlet’s description of Prophet’s Island as “the very picturesque and romantic looking” serves to justify the extinction of a Native American tribe as a part of the nation’s romantic history. The juxtaposition of these two scenes also echoes the tradition of the American picturesque that objectifies Natives Americans as “a bygone vestige of national origin” and black bodies in Southern slave plantations as, in Albert Boime’s words, “signifiers of white America’s pastoral fantasies” (qtd. in Chaney 120-121). In addition, the thematic shift from the extinction of the savage to the development of slave plantations, which was visually represented on the extended canvas of Banvard’s “moving” panorama, appeals to people’s belief in America’s historical progress.

Another transition from the nation's romanticized past to slavery can be found in two entries that come right before "Prophet's Island." "Fort Adams," a memorial to a former president of the United States, precedes the scene of the scathed tree in "Bayou Sara," where three slave criminals were punished by being burned alive. The panorama objectifies even the gruesome macabre of slave mutilation in "Bayou Sara" as one of picturesque sites for romantic tourism by using the effect of "moonlight" and juxtaposing it with the "romantic" and "beautiful" scene in "Fort Adams" (30).

These two sets of sequential movement from the American romantic history to slavery are linked to each other by the entry titled "White Cliffs." As a program booklet for the exhibition of the panorama, Banvard's *Description* prompts spectators to see these five scenes in the panorama as a continuous whole, which reads:

FORT ADAMS,

Romantically situated on the side of a beautiful hill with a noble bluff just below the village, called Loftus's Heights. Here are the remains of an old fort, erected during the administration of John Adams, in honor of whom it was named.

BAYOU SARA,

By moonlight. A short distance above this town stands an old dead tree scathed by the fire, where three negroes were burnt alive. Each of them had committed murder: one of them murdered his mistress and her two daughters. After passing Bayou Sara, the traveller will see some very beautiful cliffs, called the

WHITE CLIFFS,

On which are situated the small towns of Port Hudson and Port Hickey, and immediately below these is the very picturesque and romantic looking

PROPHET'S ISLAND.

Here formerly lived and died Wotongo, an Indian prophet,—the last of his tribe.

BATON ROUGE.

[. . .] (30)

“Bayou Sara,” which is the second entry of the first sequence, ends with a sentence that introduces the next entry, “White Cliffs.”²⁸ Also, the second half of “White Cliffs” introduces the next entry “Prophet’s Island,” which is the first entry of the second sequence. The syntactic linkage between disparate monumental sites not only verbally represents the continuity of the scenes painted on a long strip of canvas, but it also suggests two interrelated propaganda messages that underlie these five entries and, by extension, American expansionist river panoramas in general: the supremacy of white masculinity in then current history of nation building and expansion; and the romanticization of slavery.

The juxtaposition of three different kinds of patriarchy—white, black, and indigenous— in the five entries above crystalizes the Mississippi panorama’s sociopolitical function to propagandize the connection between American masculinity and the jingoistic concept of manifest destiny. The entry “Fort Adams” presents the old

fort as a symbol of historic patriarchy and military force in commemoration of John Adams, who played a leading role in the American Revolution and, later, as second president of United States, built up the nation's army and navy to defend national borders against foreign aggression. The entry also supports the superiority of white nationalist masculinity through the emphasis of the phallic images in its description of the old military stronghold "erected" on the side of a hill with "a noble bluff" called "Loftus's Heights." The solemn memorial of "historic patriarchy" and national security in "Fort Adams" contrasts with the didactic memory of the rigorous punishment for a failed black patriarch, who destroyed his family rather than securing it, in "Bayou Sara." Put between two phallic symbols, Fort Adams and another vertical scene of a cliff whose name happens to be "White Cliffs," the scene of a scarred tree in "Bayou Sara" justifies slave mutilation as justice against execrable black villains. The female name of the site, "Sara," which was arguably the name of the murdered mistress, substitutes the three anonymous murderers including the two whose crimes are left unmentioned (Chaney 121-22).²⁹ Unlike the anonymity of black murderers in "Bayou Sara," the indigenous prophet's name "Wotongo" is given in the entry. However, the irony in the two descriptions that follow his name, "an Indian prophet" and "the late of his tribe," characterizes him as another failed patriarch. As a prophet, he is doomed to foretell the extinction of his tribe; as the last of his tribe, he has no one but himself to receive the prophecy. Using these two examples of failed non-white patriarchs, the pamphlet rationalizes that white masculinity is destined to flourish by controlling or, if needed, extinguishing other races.

4.3. Black Authorship and Masculinity in Anti-Slavery Panoramas

It is not hard to imagine how male fugitive slaves felt when they saw the treatment of slavery and black patriarchy in the Mississippi panorama. Countering the dominant convention of the Mississippi panorama, two black abolitionists created anti-slavery moving panoramas in 1850: Henry Box Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* and William Wells Brown's *Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave*. They appropriated the popular genre of the moving panorama and transformed it into abolitionist propaganda in order to bring to public attention the brutal histories of slavery erased in Mississippi panoramas.

Although Wells Brown was the first to use a moving panorama for abolitionism, right after his attendance at Banvard's Mississippi panorama in 1847, it was Henry Box Brown who first completed an anti-slavery panorama. The premier exhibition of Box Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* was held at Washington Hall on Boston's Bromfield Street on 11 April 1850.³⁰ It was over six months earlier than that of Wells Brown's *Original Panoramic Views* and almost two years earlier than that of the first white anti-slavery panorama, Barton Stone Hays's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* panorama, which was given right after the publication of Stowe's novel on March 20, 1852.³¹ Unfortunately, unlike other black anti-slavery panoramas such as Wells Brown's panorama and Ball's *Mammoth Pictorial Tour*, no accompanying pamphlets or handbills, not to mention pictorial reproductions, from Box Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* have survived to the present day.³²

But, studies on Box Brown have collected the remaining information on his *Mirror of Slavery* from newspaper advertisements and review articles in his day.³³

According to these studies, Box Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* included brutal scenes of violence inflicted on slaves such as "the flogging of female as well as male slaves" and "the burning of slaves alive" in order to more aggressively counter the absence of the slave figures from the idealized American landscape in the dominant Mississippi panorama (Brooks 92; 86). As indicated in the advertisements in the *Liberator* on May 3, 1850 and in *Springfield Republican* on May 22 in the same year, Brown also ridiculed and subverted the American landscape conventions by juxtaposing traditional American scenic views such as "View of Richmond, Va." and "Washington's Tomb at Mount Vernon" with scenes demonstrating inhumane violence against slaves such "Whipping Post and Gallows at Richmond, Va." and "Slave Prisons at Washington."³⁴

Through his anti-slavery moving panorama, Box Brown not only challenged the dominant convention of Mississippi panoramas that sympathized with and even justified slavery, but he also freed himself from his earlier dependence on white abolitionists. By 1839, the factional disputes among white abolitionists eventually divided the American Anti-Slavery Society into two parts. While the part that kept the name refused to participate in electoral politics, another part organized an abolitionist political party, the Liberty Party, and nominated presidential candidates in 1840 and 1844. Though not beholden exclusively to one of these two parts, Brown's debut as a black abolitionist was greatly indebted to the patronage and financial support of both factions.³⁵ Through the

production and exhibition of *Mirror of Slavery*, however, Brown was able to construct black entrepreneurship that was independent from white abolitionists. One of the influences on Brown's rebirth as an independent abolitionist activist was Benjamin F. Roberts's notion of black "self-effort" that aimed to improve the status of African Americans through the leadership of, and collaboration between, black entrepreneurs. As a free black printer, the leader of African American community in Boston, and the publisher of *Anti-Slavery Herald*, "the first paper ever issued in Boston by a colored man," Roberts envisioned his printing office as a place in which "colored lads shall be employed & taught the business of printing" (Ruggles 83).

By transforming Box Brown into a black entrepreneur, if not a black author or artist, *Mirror of Slavery* embodied Robert's vision of self-reliant African Americans who speak for themselves. Unlike Banvard who painted his Mississippi panorama, Box Brown was not the painter of his panorama. As an article in the *Liberator* on 19 April 1850 and other contemporary newspaper articles report, Josiah Wolcott³⁶ was the primary artist who, with two more artists assisting, would have chosen preparatory sketches, planned the sequence of scenes, and painted them on a long strip of canvas.³⁷ However, it was Brown who employed these artists to, in his words, "procure the execution" of *Mirror of Slavery* (qtd. in Ruggles 74). In *The Unboxing of Henry Brown* (2003), identifying the collaborative aspects in the production of the moving panorama, Jeffrey Ruggles defines Brown's role as "the final authority" to raise funds, pay the bills, and lead the project by conducting and incorporating all the contributors and participants including painters, carpenters, mechanics, poster and pamphlet printers, and canvass

sewers (76-77). Ruggles aptly compares such a role of Brown's to that of "a film producer in bringing a motion picture to the screen" (77). Aided by his fellow free black abolitionist James Caesar Anthony Smith—who was nicknamed "Boxer" Smith because he was the one who assisted "Box" Brown's escape from slavery by packing him into his famous box, nailing it, and shipping it from Virginia to Philadelphia—Brown took the primary responsibility to solicit donations and contributions for the panorama.³⁸ As Smith revealed later, "During the time we [Smith and Box Brown] were traveling together from [D]ecember 1849 to the time the Panorama was finished" and "used everything to help get the means to finish paying for the Panorama" (qtd. in Ruggles 74).

In addition to the process of producing *Mirror of Slavery*, Box Brown's role as a panorama exhibitor enabled him to reincarnate from a fugitive slave as an object of white abolitionists' protection into an independent black abolitionist who actively mobilized and assembled fellow abolitionists' contributions and support. For panorama tours, exhibitors had many things to take care of, such as transporting the panorama and its apparatus by railroad, steamboat, or wagon, arranging with local sponsors for the use of a hall or theater, making a contract with local printers for handbills, and placing advertisements in local newspapers.³⁹ In carrying out all these duties, Box Brown and his partner Boxer Smith made good use of a network of abolitionists and anti-slavery ministers who assisted them by lending church halls free for the exhibition and by writing letters of endorsement through which they made connections ahead for the next stop.⁴⁰

The exhibition of *Mirror of Slavery* also allowed Brown to practice Roberts's idea of black "self-effort" and collaboration. After its launch in Boston in April, Brown exhibited his panorama in Worcester, Massachusetts for ten days from May 9, 1850. As a correspondent named Clarkson reported on the Worcester exhibition of the panorama in the *Liberator*, "what makes this enterprise more interesting is the fact that the whole is conducted by colored men" (qtd. in Ruggles 89-90). Clarkson also observed, "the description of the various scenes was very handsomely done by Benjamin F. Roberts, a colored man" (qtd. in Ruggles 89-90). The collaboration between Brown and Roberts, which probably started from the Boston exhibition, was mutually beneficial. For Roberts who had sued the city of Boston to end racial segregation in public schools earlier in 1850 and was waiting for the jury's decision, his participation in Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* as a showman-narrator was a good opportunity to appeal to public opinion against racial discrimination.⁴¹ In return, Brown took Roberts as a role model for his debut as a panorama narrator and an independent black entrepreneur. After Worcester, the next stop for the panorama was Springfield, Massachusetts. From the Springfield exhibition, which opened on 22 May 1850, Brown took over Roberts's role and started performing as a narrator.⁴²

His performance as a narrator and as a singer in *Mirror of Slavery* provided Brown with a venue through which he expressed himself directly to the audience. The exhibition of a moving panorama was conventionally supplemented with the showman-narrator's lecture and description of the scenes, orchestra or piano music performed by local musicians, and the display of relevant real-life objects. These audio-visual aspects

of the moving panorama would have been especially appealing to Brown who, like most ex-slaves, remained illiterate throughout his life. According to reports on the Worcester exhibition, in the earlier exhibitions of *Mirror of Slavery*, Brown appeared on stage as a singer who sang “several pieces of sacred music” as supplemental performance (Ruggles 105-106). Before long, however, Brown started to utilize his singing performance as an essential element of the panorama by adding several songs that described the painted scenes rather than simply accompanying them.⁴³ In addition, Brown’s experience of playing the role of a panorama narrator served as a momentum for his growth as an abolitionist lecturer. In his earlier performances as a panorama narrator, Brown was more like an ex-slave testifier whom white abolitionists in their conventions and lectures often presented as the physical evidence of slavery. By reenacting his resurrection from the legendary box, he displayed his body as a spectacle and as a real-life object to enhance the simulated reality of the moving panorama.⁴⁴ Also, rather than presenting a lecture or describing painted scenes, Brown usually took questions from the audience at the end of the exhibition.⁴⁵ However, in later exhibitions of *Mirror of Slavery* in England, which started from the winter of 1850, Box Brown demonstrated his improved lecturing skills by standing before the audience and explaining the scenes in the panorama. A report in the *London Times* witnessed, “[a]s the different views of the panorama presented themselves in succession, [Box Brown] explained them in a kind of lecture” (qtd. in Brooks 86).

Box Brown’s experience of taking the full measure of the panorama through multiple roles as a producer, an exhibitor, a narrator, and a performer, inspired him to

reclaim black authorship that had been erased in the publication of his first book in Boston in 1849. When he worked on his first book, Brown faced restrictions under the control of white abolitionist supporters, especially his white amanuensis Charles Stearns. As indicated in its title, *Narrative of Henry Box Brown who Escaped from Slavery Enclosed in a Box 3 Feet Long and 2 Wide Written from a Statement of Facts Made by Himself. With Remarks upon the Remedy for Slavery. By Charles Stearns*, the first version of Brown's memoir was "hardly Box Brown's book" (Newman xii). As Daphne A. Brooks asserts in *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (2006), the ghostwriter Stearns entrapped Brown's "'autobiographical' experience" in "the hyperbolic prose of (white) abolitionist propaganda" by using overblown rhetoric and placing the body of the *Narrative* between two texts—the preface and an essay titled "Cure for the Evil of Slavery"—that he wrote as an author (72). Right after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in September 1850, Brown fled to England and arrived in Liverpool in late October. While exhibiting his *Mirror of Slavery*, Brown also revised the American edition of *Narrative*. Presumably with some help from others in London, he edited out Stearns's words and overblown rhetoric and published a new edition of his *Narrative* in Manchester in 1851.⁴⁶ As he clarifies in its title, *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown Written by Himself*, Brown regained his own voice and black authorship along with his financial and political independence from white abolitionists' restrictions, which he achieved through the exhibition of *Mirror of Slavery*.

Unlike illiterate Box Brown, Wells Brown exercised more significant authorial control over the production of his panorama, based on the experience and confidence that he had built up as an accomplished writer and lecturer. In contrast to Box Brown who completed his panorama less than a year after his escape from slavery in May 1849, Wells Brown established his reputation as a powerful black abolitionist orator by 1847, during which he started his project for an anti-slavery panorama. As a self-taught reader and writer, Wells Brown also published his first book *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* in 1847, which was later followed by the publications of another memoir, novels, plays, and historical works, including the first African-American novel *Clotel* (1853). Having wide knowledge of the moving panorama conventions, which Box Brown lacked, Wells Brown selected the preparatory sketches and developed the scene sequence of his panorama by himself.⁴⁷ While collecting preparatory sketches, he left the United States in 1849 to travel in Europe, but the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 caused him to stay in England until 1854 when a British couple purchased his freedom.

Whereas Box Brown as a black abolitionist entrepreneur and lecturer depended on the visual aspects of the moving panorama to make up for his illiteracy, Wells Brown also exerted his authorship over the panorama pamphlet. In a preface to the pamphlet titled *A Description of William Wells Brown's Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave* (1850) that he wrote for his panorama, Wells Brown describes in detail his feelings and reactions to the exhibition of Banvard's Mississippi panorama in autumn 1847.

I was somewhat amazed at the very mild manner in which the “Peculiar Institution” of the Southern States was there represented, and it occurred to me that a painting, with as fair a representation of American Slavery as could be given upon canvass, would do much to disseminate truth upon this subject, and hasten the downfall[l] of the greatest evil that now stains the character of the American people. (3)

As Brown reveals, the “very mild” representation of slavery in the Mississippi panorama not just “amazed” him, but also caused him to come up with the idea of creating his own moving panorama in order to disclose the tragic realities of slavery and contribute to its speedy downfall. After his attendance at Banvard’s Mississippi panorama and the decision to create an anti-slavery panorama, it took him only a few months to complete a panorama script.⁴⁸ But, it was not until late October 1850 that he launched the exhibition of his panorama, *Original Panoramic Views*, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in North East England.⁴⁹

In some sense, Brown’s feeling of being “amazed,” rather than angry and furious, at the untruthful representation of slavery in the Mississippi panorama might look a little ingenuous, given that he was a victim who had once suffered from “the greatest evil” of slavery. Such a seemingly serene attitude, however, was Brown’s authorial strategy to exercise self-censorship for a “fair” representation of slavery. Contrary to Box Brown’s *Mirror of Slavery* that included brutal scenes of violence in slavery, Wells Brown’s panorama, as he continues to clarify in the preface, “refrain[ed] from representing those

disgusting pictures of vice and cruelty which [were] inseparable from Slavery” in order to give slave owners “nothing to complain of on the score of exaggeration” (4).

Another strategy that Wells Brown employs in his pamphlet is his appropriation of the convention of the Mississippi panorama pamphlet. Like Banvard, who established the convention, Brown uses the pamphlet as an essential element of his panorama to provide the description of painted scenes. Banvard’s *Description* has 48 pages and presents the verbal description of 32 scenes. Although Brown’s panorama has 24 scenes, 8 scenes less than those in Banvard’s, Brown’s *Description* has the same number of pages that Banvard’s *Description* has. As in Banvard’s panorama pamphlet, Brown’s pamphlet also accentuates the panoramist’s perseverance against the hardship and adversity in the production of the panorama. In the preface to *Description*, Brown underscores “considerable pains and expense” that he had to take and spend in order to obtain “a series of sketches of beautiful and interesting American scenery, as well as of many touching incidents in the lives of Slaves” and hire “skillful artists in London” to copy the collected drawings and create *Original Panoramic Views* (3-4). In addition, Brown effectively appropriates the ending of Banvard’s panorama pamphlet that focuses on the monetary issue. As examined in the first section of this chapter, Banvard’s pamphlet ends with the information on how much profit the panorama made until then and the expected commercial success in future exhibitions, in spite of the pamphlet’s earlier emphasis on Banvard’s pure patriotism as a motivation to create the panorama. Similarly, after presenting the purpose of his panorama as an “instrument in aiding the American Abolitionists in their noble efforts to abolish Negro Slavery” in the preface

(4), Brown finishes the pamphlet with the issue of money. In “Conclusion,” Brown requests donations to support Societies for the Abolition of Slavery and also enlists the donors’ names until then.

The real significance of Wells Brown’s panorama pamphlet can be found in the ways in which it transgresses and transforms the convention of glorifying white masculinity in the Mississippi panorama into the valorization of black masculinity. In pamphlets for Mississippi panoramas, authors are seldom named, whether they are panorama proprietors, panorama painters, or hired ghostwriters.⁵⁰ The use of an anonymous speaker was a necessary means to idealize the white panorama artist as a masculine national hero: if the artist had been credited as the author of the pamphlet, it would have caused an unnatural situation in which the artist had to praise himself. In contrast, Brown’s *Description* constructs both black authorship and black masculinity by presenting himself as the author and speaker of the pamphlet, but choosing to depict not the panoramist but other African Americans as masculine heroes of anti-slavery and as patriarchs and protectors of the family.

Brown’s valorization of black masculinity and patriarchy in *Description* starts at “View Fourteenth: An Attempt of a Slave to Escape with his Wife and Child. They are Attacked by Wolves.” In this scene, Brown presents a fugitive slave Henry Bibb as counterevidence against the effeminization and invalidation of black patriarchy in the Mississippi panoramas. Borrowing a scene of Henry’s courageous fight against wolves to protect his family from *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1849), Brown converts it into a pictorial

representation in his panorama. In the pamphlet, Brown quotes Henry's description of the scene from *Narrative*:

About the dead hour of the night I was aroused by the howling of a gang of blood-thirsty wolves, which had found us out, and surrounded us as their prey—there, in the dark wilderness, many miles from any house or settlement! My dear little child was so dreadfully frightened that she screamed loudly with fear. My wife trembled like a leaf on a tree at the thought of being devoured, there, in the wilderness, by a gang of ferocious wolves. [. . .] I had no weapon of defen[s]e but a long bowie-knife with a blade about two feet in length and two inches in width. I rushed forth with my knife in hand to fight off the savage wolves. (qtd. in *Description* 23-24)

In this quote, the distinction between Henry's heroic bravery and the weakness of his wife and child—the illustration of the scene in *Narrative* depicts his child as a girl who is 3-4 years old [Figure 1]—highlights masculine valor and patriarchal responsibility that Henry exerted in confronting the ferocious attacks of savage beasts. Brown clearly understands that the direct quotation of Henry's first-person narration from *Narrative* would be the most effective and convincing description of the painted scene in the panorama. By putting the quote in the pamphlet and presumably reading it aloud in the exhibition of the panorama, Brown successfully uses the scene from Henry's *Narrative* as part of his project to reconstruct black masculinity and patriarchy.

Wells Brown's *Description* also counters the convention of romanticizing slavery and idealizing white supremacy in Mississippi panorama through his comment on the inhumanity of slavery right after the quote from Henry's memoir. Brown writes:

This description [from Henry's *Narrative*] gives us some idea of what an American fugitive Slave has to endure in making his escape from Slavery. The view now before us shows the inhumanity of man to his fellow-man in compelling him, if he would be free, to run the danger of being torn to pieces by wild beasts. This poor man, with his wife and child, although they succeeded in escaping the fangs of the wolves, were afterwards overtaken and carried back into Slavery. (24)

Brown contrasts Henry's valor to protect his family against "the danger of being torn to pieces by wild beasts" with the cold-hearted cruelty and "inhumanity" of slave owners and overseers that "compell[ed]" slaves to face such dangerous situations. The juxtaposition of slave hunters with beasts of prey effectively characterizes the former as more savage than the latter: although Henry managed to escape the savage wolves, he was not able to escape the slave hunters.

In addition to the emphasis on the brutal savageness of slave hunters, Wells Brown condemns white masculinity by providing a scene in which slave hunters are depicted as less courageous than a fugitive slave woman. "View Twentieth: Escape of a Woman—Fearful Passage of the River" is about a female fugitive slave who escaped with her child across the river on floating ice, which Harriet Beecher Stowe later borrowed and used in Eliza's escape scene in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Brown



Figure 1. "Henry Bibb and Family." *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb*. 1849.
 The *Filson Historical Society*. Web. 8 May 2012.

first focuses on the slave woman's fear and long hesitation before she decides to cross the river: "The woman, on reaching the river, found the ice moving slowly down [. . .] In this situation she remained for some hours, afraid to attempt to cross the river, and every moment expecting the arrival of her master" (33). But, once she noticed that the slave hunter was approaching and soon to catch up with her, she courageously stepped upon the ice. Although the ice "cracked under her feet," she was brave enough to keep going "from mass to mass" because "her love of freedom" was "predominating over her fears" (33). At the same time, her fear of slave hunters, whose brutal masculinity was portrayed as more savage than the wild beasts in the earlier scene, also caused her to be brave. This is because her fear of being caught and brought back to slavery was greater than the fear of jumping into the cold river and walking on floating ice at the risk of being drowned with her child. When the slave hunter reached the shore, he demonstrated the stereotyped image of white American masculinity. Full of confidence in his masculine power and determination, he adroitly "sprang from his horse with the intention of following the woman and fetching her back" (33-34). As Brown continues to demonstrate, however, the slave hunter turned out to be more cowardly than the fugitive slave woman. As soon as he saw that the ice on the river was moving, "his courage failed him and he could proceed no further" (34). Through the contrast between the fugitive slave woman's bravery and the slave hunter's lack of courage, the pamphlet successfully ridicules white masculinity.⁵¹

In order to further invalidate the supremacy of white masculinity, Wells Brown features a male fugitive slave named Leander as an ideal of black masculinity. As

shown in “View Sixteenth: Escape of Leander, the Heroic Slave,” Leander was one of those who participated in the early stages of Nat Turner’s revolt against slave owners in Virginia in 1831. Leander took a leading role as one of the first ones that suggested plans for slaves’ escape from slavery. Against others who desired to take revenge on their oppressors, Leander proposed a more peaceful plan. He suggested that slaves should all “set out in the night” and “march off peaceably” and insisted that the use of force would be acceptable only as a protective measure to resist slave owners’ attempt to take them back (26). Hinting that more scenes on Leander’s valor and heroic acts would follow later in the panorama, Wells Brown also accentuates that Leander’s disagreement with others who were “in favour of resorting to fire and sword” was not due to “want of courage on his part” (26).

As in the case of Henry, Brown demonstrates that Leander’s yearning for black patriarchy was central to his non-violent and self-protective masculinity. The second half of “View Sixteen” reports what happened to Leander after the suppression of the slave revolt. After being sold to Kentucky, he fell in love with a slave woman named Matilda in the neighboring plantation. Rather than marrying her, Leander laid a plan to escape with her to Canada since he wanted to be a head of family, which was not allowed to a slave man. Leander often said, “I will never marry while I am a Slave. These Slave-holders shall never own a child of mine” (26-27). However, his plan was discovered before he put it into action and he had to leave his lover behind and escape alone in order not to be sold to a slave trader. As most fugitive slaves did, he hid during

the day and travelled at night. A few days later, while he was waiting for nightfall in the woods, he found that three slave hunters with a dog were chasing him.

In describing how Leander escaped the slave hunters' chase, Brown presents the scene as counterevidence against the supremacy of white masculinity. Brown identifies two causes for Leander's success in escaping. First, Leander's muscular strength and endurance made it possible for him to keep a safe distance from the chasing dog: "Leander, who was a very fast runner, made for a neighboring stream of water, and, leaping into it, swam for the opposite shore" (27-28). Also, the slave hunter's poor shooting skill saved Leander from the dog which otherwise would have chased him tirelessly. As Brown writes, "The Slave-owner, who was armed with a gun, fearing that Leander would escape from the dog, fired at him; but instead of shooting the man, he shot the dog, and thus the Slave succeeded in reaching the opposite bank, and made his escape to Canada" (28). Through the contrast between the fugitive slave's masculine power and the white slave hunter's incompetence in handling a gun, a symbol of masculinity and phallic power, Brown effectively glorifies black masculinity and, at the same time, derides white masculinity.

Brown also demonstrates how Leander's masculinity not only saved him from slavery, but it also allowed him to be an ideal of black patriarchy. As "View Eighteenth" shows, upon his arrival in Canada, Leander began to plan the escape of the woman whom he had engaged to marry. After several failed attempts to hire white men to save her from slavery, Leander "determined to return for her himself, against the remonstrances of many who wished him to forego the attempt" (30). Due to his courage,

perseverance, and wits, Leander successfully overcame adversity and survived dangerous moments in returning to Kentucky and escaping with her to freedom. In nine days after his departure, Leander was “in the vicinity of his former slave home”; however, to get an opportunity of secretly meeting his fiancée, he had to wait several days “during which time he lived entirely upon the raw Indian corn” (30). At night on the third day of his waiting, he found a company of slave workers singing and passing his hiding-place, joined them without being discovered, and met Matilda with their help.

In addition to bravery and wits, Leander’s agility and dexterous skill in riding a horse, which is another essential characteristic of American masculinity, prove the superiority of Leander’s masculinity over white masculinity. On the last day of their journey to Ohio, one of the free states, whilst only a dozen miles from Ohio, Leander and Matilda found themselves chased by a dog and two slave hunters. At such a moment of imminent peril, Leander did not lose his wits. Noticing that a horse was tied to a fence with no one near it, Leander mounted the horse, took her up with him, and made for the river that runs between Kentucky and Ohio.

Brown also describes a conflict between two groups, white slave hunters and African American males, in order to generalize Leander’s individual superiority over the slave hunters into the collective superiority of black masculinity over white masculinity. In “View Twenty-second: Rescue of a Fugitive Family—A Battle for Freedom,” Brown first presents a recollection of what he experienced as a resident in Buffalo, New York on a day in the autumn of 1836. He was “aroused” by the news that slave hunters had “kidnapped” a fugitive family in Canada during the previous night and was approaching

the state of New York on their way back to the slave owner's farm (35). As insinuated in his word choice "kidnapped," the news provoked his anger and frustration not only because the capture of fugitive slaves from Canada was deemed unlawful to him but also because all fugitive slaves including him were exposed to the danger of being captured and returned to slavery. Then, Brown demonstrates how his individual feeling resonated with the whole black community's response to the news. Since "the coloured population of Buffalo" mainly consisted of fugitive slaves and considered themselves members of an extended family, the news that "a brother Fugitive and his family had been seized and dragged from their home at dead of night" rapidly spread and created "no little sensation" in the black community (35). Black men of Buffalo did not hesitate in "getting horses, and going in different directions in search of the fugitives" (35). One party of the pursuers soon found the kidnappers, easily retook the slave family from them, and escorted the fugitives to Black Rock from which they could cross the Niagara River toward Canada. However, before they arrived at Black Rock, they found themselves besieged by a group of white men who were mostly canal workers under the command of a sheriff that the slave owner employed. Brown's description of the "terrible conflict" that ensued emphasizes the masculine valor of black men (35). Although the white men were "twice the number of the blacks," the latter courageously defeated the attack of the former (35-36).

While Brown starts the scene "Rescue of a Fugitive Family" with the shift from his personal feeling to the collective response to the news, he ends it with a reversed transition from a party of black men as a whole into his focus on two individuals, Brown

himself, and Leander. Wells Brown first confesses that he feels “a degree of pleasure at the recollection of having been one of those who” fought against the slave hunters and saved the fugitive family from them (36). Through this confession, he identifies him as an eyewitness and as a member of black men in Buffalo, both of which allow him to establish authority and credibility in faithfully representing the scene and using it as evidence to support his argument for the collective superiority of black masculinity over white masculinity. Brown also reveals that Leander was one of those who took a prominent role in the conflict between the black men of Buffalo and the white slave hunters. As Brown points out, Leander was the one that “brought the news to Buffalo that the fugitive family had been kidnapped” and prompted all the black men in Buffalo to unite together to rescue the family from the slave hunters. “[Leander] is a tall, strong man,” Brown describes, “and you will readily recognize him in the View before us, represented as he is behind the carriage, in contest with a white man” (36). To idealize Leander as an essence of black masculinity, Brown emphasizes Leander’s physical power and heroic valor through the use of both the visual representation in the panorama and the verbal representation in his pamphlet.

Wells Brown’s premise behind his construction of black masculinity, especially in his use of the circular transition—from Leander as an ideal model of black masculinity, through a real-life story on the collective masculinity of black men in their defeat of white slave hunters, back into Leander’s leadership in the conflict—is his faith that right makes might.⁵² The second of the two consecutive scenes on the rescue of the fugitive family is view twenty-third which depicts a battle scene at the ferry when they

cross the Niagara River toward the Canadian side. Using a first-person pronoun “we,” Brown explains the black men’s determined mindset at the battle: “the fact that our cause was just, together with the cries of the fugitives on the one hand, and the cheers of our friends on the other, gave us fresh courage, and each one seemed to have made up his mind to die, rather than to suffer the Slaves to be taken back” (36). All the black men in the conflict exerted heroic valor in fearlessly confronting white slave hunters who were “superior in point of numbers” (36). Once the boat moved from the dock and the fugitive family and the black rescuers got on it, the boat floated down the stream and soon landed on the Canadian side. As Brown comments, their success was due to both “the aid of the current, and the machinery being put in motion” (37). Brown emphasizes that the masculinity of black men should be superior to that of white slave hunters since mother nature took the side with the former who fought against the latter for the sake of justice and humanitarianism in saving their “brother” slave and his family from the evil of slavery.

4.4. Coda: Hope for “True Freedom”

In the last section of *Description*, “View Twenty-fourth. The Fugitive’s Home—A Welcome to the Slave—True Freedom,” Wells Brown changes the tone of revealing and accusing the harsh reality of slavery into imaginary and prophetic voices. Throughout all the preceding scenes, Wells Brown mainly focuses on divulging the cruelty and savage of slavery by countering the convention of the Mississippi panorama

that mollifies and sympathizes with slavery. In these scenes, against the glorification of white supremacy in the Mississippi panorama, Wells Brown also reports the real-life stories of the heroic masculinity that African American men exerted in escaping to freedom and saving other fugitive slaves from slavery. In contrast to the “fair” and “truth[ful]” representation of slavery, which he promised in the preface of *Description*, the last section is full of Wells Brown’s imaginary visions. The first four sentences of the final section read:

You have now accompanied the fugitive, amidst perils by land and perils by water, from his dreary bondage in the Republican Egypt of the United States to the River Niagara. You must now imagine yourselves as having crossed that river, and as standing, with the Slave, upon the soil over which the mild scepter of Queen Victoria extends; that scepter not more the emblem of regal authority than of freedom and protection to the persecuted Slave. Before you are those whom you have seen in the last two Views. They are now on British soil, and are exulting in their triumphant escape from their heartless oppressors. (37-38)

Through the use of the pronoun “you” to directly refer to the audience in the pamphlet and with the help of the visual effects of illusionism in the panorama, Wells Brown invites the audience to cross over the boundary between reality and representation and imagine that they are within the painted view of the previous two scenes. Unlike all the other sections of *Description* that describe the corresponding view in the panorama, Wells Brown also prompts the audience to expand their imagination over the bound of

the panorama, which ends at the previous scene depicting the battle on the boat, and create their own visions of what would come after the end of the panorama in their mind's eyes. Wells Brown also guides the audience to envision the hopeful future of freedom through the images of "British soil" and "the mild scepter of Queen Victoria," both of which he uses as "emblem[s]" of "freedom and protection."⁵³

In the second half of the last section, Wells Brown employs the image of a male "stranger" and "sojourner" (38) in order to further help the audience to visualize the future of "universal emancipation." Taking on the persona of a black prophet, Wells Brown meditates:

The moment he sets his foot upon British earth, [. . .] the ground on which he treads is holy, and consecrated by the genius of Universal Emancipation. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced; no matter what complexion incompatible with freedom an Indian or an African sun may have burnt upon him; no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down; no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of Slavery; the first moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the god sink together in the dust; his soul walks abroad in her own majesty; his body swells beyond the measure of his chains that burst from around him, and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled, by the irresistible Genius of UNIVERSAL EMANCIATION." (Upper cases original 38)

Wells Brown's prophecy encourages the audience to imagine the future in which all human beings are free and equal under the higher and divine law, regardless of what race, skin color, and man-made law such as slavery. While the female images of "her own majesty" and "the sacred soil of Britain" symbolize the promised land of freedom, the future generation of free human beings is embodied into the image of an anonymous male. The expansion of the male body symbolically visualizes the liberation of all human beings from the "chain" of slavery and any other constraints. Also, through the image of the muscular, giant, hulk-like male who stands "redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled" by "universal emancipation" as the spirit of the era, Wells Brown suggests that the redemption and regeneration of black masculinity into the ideal masculinity for all men should be possible by, and essential for, the emancipation of human beings.

As discussed in this chapter, Box Brown's *Mirror of Slavery* and Wells Brown's *Original Panoramic Views* are different from each other in many aspects—including how they appropriate, manipulate, and counter the dominating convention of the Mississippi panorama, how they represent slavery, what roles the two black abolitionists played in the production and exhibition of their panoramas, etc. Despite all these differences, the symbolic image of the giant man in the last section of Wells Brown's *Description* encapsulates the significance of masculinity for these two black abolitionists who stood in front of their audiences as exemplars of black heroism. Whereas Banvard presented the white panorama artist's Herculean masculinity as a requirement for the creation of the Mississippi panorama as the largest national art to represent the nation's vast and masculine landscape, both Browns might want their fellow Americans to dream

and pursue the future of “true freedom” through their anti-slavery moving panoramas which they used as both venues and eulogies for the expansion of black masculinity.

Notes

1. See Miller, “The Panorama” 46.

2. See Oettermann 323.

3. See Callaway 144.

4. Ibid.; Comment 62.

5. These two black abolitionist panoramas were followed by another anti-slavery panorama by a black abolitionist photographer James Presley Ball, titled *Mammoth Pictorial Tour of the United States, Comprising Views of the African Slave Trade; of Northern and Southern Cities; of Cotton and Sugar Plantations; of the Mississippi, Ohio, and Susquehanna Rivers, Niagara Falls & C.* (1855) as well as at least six anti-slavery panoramas based on Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) created by white abolitionist painters, as I will examine in the next chapter.

6. The half-decade of 1988-1993 observed the publication of major works by post-colonialist theorists, including Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin’s “The Empire Writes Back” (1989), Ashcroft’s *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (1990), Robert J.C. Young’s *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (1990), and Edward W. Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

7. Miller argues that the term “National school” is a “rhetorical construction” which should not be considered as “accurately representing either the full range of

landscapes produced in these years or the existence of contrasting and alternative modes of landscape representation” (4).

8. See Miller, *The Empire of the Eye* 1-4; Baker 1-3.

9. About the dispute between Banvard and John Rowson Smith, both of whom claimed to be the first one to create the panorama of the Mississippi, see McDermott 50 and Oettermann 331.

10. See also Smith 111-112.

11. Quoted from Caleb Cushing’s 1839 Fourth of July oration titled *Oration of Material Growth and Territorial Progress of the United States* [Springfield: Merriam, Wood], 19-20.

12. Baker 69.

13. See Baker 71.

14. See Fay 24; Rosenwaike 16.

15. See Oettermann 330; Hyde 132.

16. See Comment 64; Oettermann 341.

17. See Oettermann 342.

18. Ibid., 342; Moldenhauer 228; Baker 67.

19. See Prchal 188-93.

20. See also Rainwater 30-43.

21. See Lueck 91-119.

22. Baker 67-68.

23. In this chapter, I use *Description of Banvard's Panorama of the Mississippi River, Painted on Three Miles of Canvas: Exhibiting a View of Country 1200 Miles in Length, Extending from the Mouth of the Missouri River to the City of New Orleans; Being By Far the Largest Picture Ever Executed by Man* (1847). The other two versions are as follows: *Banvard's Geographical Panorama of the Mississippi & Missouri Rivers at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly*, [London: Printed by W. J. Golbourn, 6, Princess Street, Leicester Square, 1848]; *Banvard's Geographical Panorama of the Mississippi River, with the Story of Mike Fink, the Last of the Boatmen, a Tale of River Life*, [Boston: John Putman, Printer, 1847]. Although, as Baker points out, the section on Mike Fink is added to these two pamphlets (74; 161), it is not included in *Description of Banvard's Panorama*.

24. McDermott 20-36; Baker 78.

25. See Oettermann 328.

26. Banvard's panorama arrived at Armoury Hall in Boston, the third stop on its tour, in December 1846 and was exhibited there almost a year before it moved to the next stop, New York, and opened at Panorama Hall on Broadway, New York on December 13, 1847 (McDermott 39-40; Hyde 132).

27. See Kendall Johnson 9.

28. See Chaney 121.

29. Chaney also argues that the functional name of the island "gently replaces genocide with a romance of historical displacement" (122)

30. Ruggles 88; Newman xxvii.

31. See chapter 5.3.

32. See Brooks 86.

33. See Ruggles 69-109; Brooks 77-94; Fisch 73-83; Spencer 235-45; Wolff, "Passing beyond" 23-44.

34. See Brooks 87-88; Spencer 238; Newman xxvii-xxviii.

35. See Ruggles 83.

36. He is famous for his two landscape paintings of Brook Farm in 1843 and in circa 1844-46 respectively.

37. See Ruggles 74-76.

38. Ibid., 81; 74.

39. Ibid., 91.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 87.

42. Ibid., 105-106.

43. Ibid.

44. Brooks 86.

45. Ruggles 105.

46. See Newman xii.

47. Ruggles 76.

48. Brooks 84.

49. Farrison 174-76.

50. Baker 68. As in the case of Banvard's panorama, panorama painters were often panorama proprietors.

51. This scene also elevates black feminine power. Concerning a feminist reading of Wells Brown's *Clothel or The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States* (1853), see Angelyn Mitchell's "Her Side of His Story" (1992).

52. The phrase "Right Makes Might" was later used as the title of Abraham Lincoln's speech at the Cooper Union, New York City, on 27 February 1860.

53. Given that the exhibition of Wells Brown's panorama launched in London, Wells Brown also used Britain and Queen Victoria as metaphors for freedom and protection in order to flatter his British audience.

5. THE TWO GREATEST HITS OF ANTEBELLUM AMERICA: MOVING PANORAMAS AND *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*

In the 1980s and the early 1990s, studies on Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) tended to criticize Stowe's limited or prejudiced view on political issues from modern post-colonialist and feminist perspectives. For example, in "Breakfast in America: Uncle Tom's Cultural Histories" (1990), Rachel Bowlby condemns Stowe's sentimental racism and colonialist view of African Americans, especially "black" women, as "commodity" (204).¹ According to Bowlby, despite its "appeal to a common humanity rooted in the Christian heart," the novel agrees with the idea that "the raw, or human material is not the same" (200). Bowlby argues that while Topsy is "'virgin soil,' a neutral territory yet to be sown with humanizing plants . . . by the agency of Miss Ophelia" who represents "civilized cultivation or colonization," Eva is "a fully formed moral being from the beginning" and "already a grown plant" with an "incorruptible integrity" (201). In addition, as Sheila Ruzzycki O'Brien points out, many critics in this period, including Ann Douglas, Thomas Joswick, Lisa Watt MacFarlane, and Jean Fagan Yellin, denounced Stowe's naïve and ineffective optimistic version of abolitionism in the novel (449).

In their effort to rediscover *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, recent studies make two distinct shifts from their predecessors. By emphasizing the social, political, and cultural significance of Stowe's novel and its popularity in antebellum America, some critics recently pay more careful attention to specific contexts within and against which she

created the first million-selling novel—at the same time, the most influential political writing²—for then unpopular and “told too oft” (*UTC* 202) causes such as abolition and woman’s rights. For example, Barbara Hochman in “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in the *National Era*” (2004) examines Stowe’s novel in the context of the abolitionist and literary materials that were published together with it in the *National Era* and asserts that Stowe appropriates and challenges the conventional rhetoric and images in contemporary abolitionist writings. Cynthia Griffin Wolff in “‘Masculinity’ in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*” (1995) historicizes the tension between stereotyped “ruthless, power-hungry” American manhood and revisionist notions of masculinity—such as “fraternal love” (610)—among different factions within the abolitionist movement and defines Stowe’s novel as a polemical writing with careful maneuvers not to offend the “conservative, often bigoted,” and “hostile” readers.

Although agreeing with the earlier emphasis on the significance of the historical context, the second shift takes a broader approach to defining *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, influenced by cultural studies which posits that the idea of a text refers to all kinds of cultural artifacts rather than being confined to written texts. The scholars in this shift, including Jim O’Loughline and Jo-Ann Morgan, define *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a cultural text in which issues such as gender, race, and nationhood are contested.³ In their definition, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is an unstable cultural text that exceeds the bounds of Stowe’s original novel and encompasses its contemporary incarnations and adaptations, such as parody novels, “Tom” shows in a variety of forms, paintings depicting scenes from the novel, and even book illustrations for different editions of the novel. These

scholars criticize Jane Tompkins and Richard Brodhead for narrowly focusing on Stowe's novel and misunderstanding the popularity of its varied adaptations as an effect of the original novel alone.⁴

Recent Stowe scholarship of the last ten years observes the increased interest in the visual culture within and surrounding Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Critics such as Ellen J. Goldner (2001), Sheila Ruzycki O'Brien (2006), Carla Rineer (2006), and Morgan (2007) all understand Stowe's novel not as an isolated work but as part of contemporary visual culture. They carefully analyze visual elements within the novel—e.g., Stowe's "verbal pictures" (Goldner 71) and "picture-language" (O'Brien 456)—and various visual artifacts generated from the novel, including illustrations, posters, commercial lithography, and paintings, within the cultural and historical context of antebellum America.

This chapter contributes to studies of Stowe and visual culture by foregrounding the context of the most popular visual mass medium in antebellum America, the moving panorama.⁵ Despite recent Stowe scholarship's increased interest in popular visual culture, there has been no study that focuses specifically on Stowe and the panorama. This is probably because, contrary to other antebellum writers, including Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, who actively and overtly show their interest in popular visual culture, Stowe, due to her Calvinist background, often revealed her objection to popular theatre and shied away from using the word "panorama." Also, no moving panoramas which were used in Tom shows, except a few illustrations, survive to the present.

Here I collect and reassemble remaining fragmentary pieces of information into a broader, if not complete, picture on the topic—the interactions between the two “greatest hits” in mid-nineteenth century America, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and the moving panorama.⁶ Accepting the concept of cultural text as set out in recent Stowe scholarship, I define various contemporary works and materials as cultural texts for this topic, which include Stowe’s novel and the panorama as well as the dramatizations of the novel, their playbills, and panorama pamphlets and handbills. I also examine other materials from Stowe’s time—such as advertisements and reviews in periodicals, panorama pamphlets and handbills, and playbills— as well as sources on antebellum theatres and existing studies on the dramatizations of Stowe’s novel.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how multifaceted interactions between *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and the moving panorama reinforce or challenge the contemporary social, political, and cultural norms concerning slavery and gender. These interactions can be divided into four chronological and logical stages. In the first section about the influence of the moving panorama on Stowe and her novel writing, I identify the moving panorama as a source for a series of epiphanic visions that, she claimed, passed before her mind’s eye and were written down in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The second section analyzes how Stowe in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* criticizes the social construction of the objectifying, dominating white male gaze in the convention of the Mississippi panorama, the most popular subgenre of the moving panorama in Stowe’s day. In the third section, I historicize two different kinds of encounters between the moving panorama and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in the post-UTC era, white abolitionist painters’ anti-slavery panoramas

based on Stowe's novel and the use of the Mississippi panorama as a backdrop in Tom plays. I demonstrate how their different uses of the moving panorama reflect their different attitudes towards slavery in Stowe's novel. In the concluding section, I return to Stowe and briefly consider how these counters between *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the moving panorama influenced Stowe after the publication of the novel. In her later novel *The Minister's Wooing* (1859), Stowe uses the moving panorama as a metaphor for Mrs. Marvyn's repressed desire for freeing and expanding herself from the domestic sphere as well as social regulations and prejudice against women. I argue that, through the metaphor of the moving panorama, Stowe suggests the possibility of constructing an alternative mode of panoramic vision for female subjectivity.

5. 1. Stowe and the Moving Panorama

The majority of Stowe's fellow writers—including Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne Whitman, Melville, Fuller, Alcott, and Willis, as discussed earlier—used the panorama as a key metaphor to contest their different positions on sociopolitical issues such as vision, gender, and race. However, Stowe was one of the few antebellum writers who hardly used the word “panorama,” whether as a direct reference to the panorama painting or as a metaphor. A possible reason for Stowe's reluctance to use the word can be found in her overt objection to the theater, since the panorama was an art form that combined landscape painting and the theatrical play. Her resentment and suspicion against the play are clearly indicated in a letter that she sent in the spring of 1852 to Asa

Hutchinson, a famous temperance singer, who had requested permission to dramatize *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁷ As she writes in the letter, she asked her “different friends” for advice on Hutchinson’s proposal and found that their “general sentiment” accorded with her own, which was that “any attempt on the part of Christians to identify themselves with [theatrical performances]” would be dangerous to “the individual character” as well as “the general cause” (qtd. in Stockbridge 84).

Stowe’s explanation in the letter of the reasons behind her and her advisers’ negative sentiment toward the theater is noteworthy. They oppose even “respectable and moral” plays because if the introduction of these good plays once breaks down the “barrier which now keeps young people of Christian families from theatrical entertainments,” there will then be “five bad plays to one good,” and young Christians will then be “open to all the temptations of those who are not such” (Stockbridge 84). Stowe continues to warn that any attempt to “reform dramatic entertainments,” not matter how “specious” it may be, is “wholly impracticable” (Stockbridge 84). “[A]s a friend,” she even advises Hutchinson not to “run the risk of so dangerous an experiment” (Stockbridge 84). From a present-day perspective in this age of visual mass media, Stowe’s logic, an obvious example of slippery slope fallacy, can be considered as the narrow-mindedness of an overly religious woman. However, among orthodox Protestants in Stowe’s day, such an antagonism against the theater was, as she mentions in the letter, really “general sentiment,” as exemplified in the fact that, until 1862, any kind of theatrical performance was illegal in Hartford (Gossett 261).

In spite of her hostility toward the theater and her avoidance of the word “panorama,” Stowe may have not totally protected herself from the all-pervading interest in moving panoramas around her, including advertisements and reviews in periodicals and the conversation among her abolitionist friends. By the time of the publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Stowe had to a great extent freed herself from the strait-laced moralism of her Calvinist family and social background.⁸ Stowe stopped condemning Dickens for his good characters’ lack of firm Christian faith and no longer criticized dancing, painting, and sculpture for exposing or portraying the naked human body.⁹

Another reason for Stowe’s possible interest in American moving panoramas, which were often described as “great national paintings” (Baker 66), is her deep-seated passion for the arts throughout her life. Influenced by her mother, Roxana Beecher, who studied painting with “a good New York artist,” Stowe, in her younger days, took drawing lessons and once thought that she would become a teacher of painting, as she wrote in her letter to her grandmother in 1828 (Hedrick 52-53). Also, in a letter to Gamaliel Bailey, the editor of the *National Era*, on March 9, 1851, about three months before the first installment of her novel in that periodical on June 5, Stowe expresses the influence of painting on her novel writing. Comparing her “vocation” as a novel writer to “that of a painter,” she clarifies that her “object” is to “hold up” slavery “in the most lifelike and graphic manner possible” (Belasco 53). By 1853 when she departed for her first European tour, she had already shown a considerable “liaison” with pictures through her use of illustrations and her understanding of their powerful effects on her readers (Rineer 188).

The first evidence showing Stowe's knowledge of the moving panorama and its significant influence on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the vision of a tortured slave which she had in the First Parish Church in Brunswick, Maine, in February 1851 and later turned into the death scene of Tom. This epiphanic experience is explained in details in her autobiography titled *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe Compiled from Her Letters and Journals*, which was written in her last days with the help of, and in the voice of, her son Charles Edward Stowe. In the description of her visual imagination, although Stowe does not specify the word "panorama," she is clearly alluding to the moving panorama when she relates, "Suddenly, like *the unrolling of a picture*, the scene of the death of Uncle Tom *passed before* her mind" (Italics mine 148).

Furthermore, it was not just the scene of Tom's death but Stowe's whole novel that she compares to the moving panorama, as suggested in her own remarks on the novel. In her letter to Mrs. Howard right after the completion of her novel, Stowe explains that she just wrote down what "came before [her] [as] a series of visions, one after another" (Fields 163). In sum, all these accounts—Stowe's two explanations of her visions and her comparison of her novel writing to painting— demonstrate how Stowe associates her novel with the moving panorama: Stowe's vision of the tortured slave was one of a series of visions that passed one after another before her mind's view and she depicted in the most graphic manner possible the grand panorama of slavery, which comprised her visions, in her novel rather than on canvas.

The allusion to a nineteenth-century optical device in Stowe's description of her vision has been noticed in a recent study. In his 2007 book titled *Loves of Harriet*

Beecher Stowe, Philip McFarland argues that Stowe's vision in the First Parish Church is a reference to the diorama. McFarland writes, "she sat drifting in a dreamlike state where sometimes her mind would wander. All at once an image appeared to her, like *a diorama in ghastly motion*, of three men looming over a fourth on the ground" (Italics mine 75). Considering the difference and similarity between the panorama and the diorama, however, it seems that McFarland uses the word "diorama" in the sense of the moving panorama or simply confuses the former with the latter. The diorama was a static painting on a conventional canvas of rectangular format, invented in 1822 by two panorama painters, Charles-Marie Bouton and Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, who later invented the daguerreotype and acquired a patent for it in 1839. In contrast, in the moving panorama, although the painted images are not moving, a long strip of canvas is wound between two vertical rollers and unrolled before the spectators' eyes in order to create the illusion of real-life railroad or steamboat travel. This exactly corresponds with the description of Stowe's vision in her autobiography: as quoted above, "like the unrolling of a picture," the vision of a tortured slave "passed before" her mind's eye.

The confusion between the panorama and the diorama can be traced back to the very early stage in the history of the diorama, which soon became one of the major rivals to the panorama. The word "diorama"—with its prefix "di," a variant of the Greek 'dia' for "passing through," indicating its mechanism of using the lighting effects on the semi-transparent canvas—initially functioned as a modish term to appeal to the public with its pristine freshness and generic difference from the panorama (Altick 200-201). Unlike the moving panorama, the canvas of the diorama did not actually move; however, from

its earlier marketing, the diorama was often titled “moving diorama” to impose the connotation of moving onto the illusions of time passage, sunsets, and ongoing storms that were conjured on the single static scene through the use of special pigments, lighting, and sound.¹⁰ The terminology for the diorama and the panorama became more complicated and confusing due to the appearance of hybrid forms which combined characteristics of both the panorama and the diorama since they were called alternatively by “panorama,” “diorama,” or “moving diorama” (Cook 43; Barney 249). In addition, the dioramic effects were soon transferred to the moving panorama, as exemplified in one of a few remaining moving panoramas, *Panorama of Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress*, which is also known as *Bunyan Tableaux*.

The *Panorama of Pilgrim’s Progress*, which was created by Joseph Kyle and his son-in-law, Jacob A. Dallas in 1850-51, arguably might have been an original source that inspired Stowe to see the image of Tom’s death through a panoramic vision. Having been considered lost for a long time, the revised edition of *Bunyan Tableaux* was discovered in the basement of the York Institute in Saco, Maine in 1996 exactly a century after the museum acquired it by donation in 1896.¹¹ Thanks to the increased scholarly attention to this rediscovered panorama, it is possible to provide some circumstantial evidence for its considerable influence on Stowe, if not her attendance at the exhibition.

Within the context of the Protestant revival of the early nineteenth century, Stowe and many contemporaries, especially conservatives of the Low Church, regarded Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* “as second only to the Bible as the most widely read and

translated book of the era.”¹² As many biographers observe, the influence of Bunyan’s book on Stowe was revealed throughout her life.¹³ In her introduction to *A Library of Famous Fiction: Embracing the Nine Standard Masterpieces of Imaginative Literature* (1873), Stowe even extols *Pilgrim’s Progress* as “the highest miracle of genius” and the only allegory that “possesses a strong human interest” while “[o]ther allegories amuse the fancy” (ix).

The *Panorama of Pilgrim’s Progress* was first exhibited in New York’s Washington Hall, which turned out to be a great success, lasting six months straight from mid-November 1850 through April 1851, while other popular panorama exhibitions usually lasted six to eight weeks in one city.¹⁴ About 200,000 people, equal to nearly one-third of the New York population, attended the show with the 50-cent admission fee per each person. Stowe’s vision of Tom’s death scene in February of 1851 was coterminous with the middle of the New York exhibition of the panorama. After its first exhibition in New York, the panorama toured through different cities including Providence and Boston in 1851 and then Richmond, Virginia and Charleston, South Carolina by 1853.¹⁵ The great success of the panorama encouraged Kyle and Dallas to produce a second version which traveled nationwide for decades and was finally donated to the Saco museum in Maine in October of 1896.¹⁶

In addition to Stowe’s admiration of Bunyan’s original work and the phenomenal success of the panorama, the aesthetic quality of the *Panorama of Pilgrim’s Progress* was high enough to attract attention from Stowe who had a life-long passion for fine arts. Unlike most panoramas created by amateur artists or theatrical scene painters, it

was formally trained artists that created the *Bunyan Tableaux*. Two out of the three main artists, Edward Harrison May (1824-1887) and Joseph Kyle (1809-1863), were associate members of the National Academy of Design and May's teacher, the National Academician Daniel Huntington, granted him permission to copy his *Mercy's Dream* (1841) and *Christiana and Her Children in the Valley of the Shadow of Death* (1842-44).¹⁷ Other participants who provided designs for individual scenes included Hudson River School painters Frederic Edwin Church and Jasper Francis Cropsey: Church contributed a variant of his *Valley of the Shadow of Death, Pilgrim's Progress* (1847) and Cropsey submitted two sketches.¹⁸

Many newspaper reviews appreciated the artistic and educational value of the *Panorama of Pilgrim's Progress*.¹⁹ The editor of the *Concord, New Hampshire Independent Democrat* remarked, "with all 'cheap shows' and second-rate exhibitions of the day, we are glad at length to recognize a work of superior artistic merit and of such excellent character" (qtd. in Hardiman 17). Also, as a review in the *New York Tribune* on 28 February 1851 observes, in spite of their objection to popular theatrical amusements, clergymen from many sects widely admired the panorama; they often attended the panorama with school groups and gave them some lectures or sermons during the exhibition.²⁰ According to an article in the *Boston Transcript* on 23 May 1851, Stowe's brother, Henry Ward Beecher, not only attended the New York exhibition of the *Bunyan Tableaux* but also publicly supported it. As the article records, before the closing of the panorama in Washington Hall on 29 April, seventeen ministers including

Henry offered testimonials to the panorama to support its “peculiar claims upon the patronage of Christians” (qtd. in Avery, *The Panorama* 245).

The contemporary reception that valorized the artistic and educational superiority of the *Panorama of Pilgrim's Progress* is epitomized in a review in the *Independent* published on 5 December 1850. Stowe, her brother Henry, and her husband Calvin Ellis Stowe, as readers and contributors, had a close relationship with the *Independent*. Henry contributed his essay titled “Disagreement between Congregationalists and Presbyterians” to the *Independent* on November 15, 1849, about one year before this review was published in the same periodical. As a biblical scholar and a professor of Bowdoin College, Calvin published his essay on the association of clergymen in Massachusetts in the *Independent* on the 4th of July in 1850, five months ahead of the publication of the review on the panorama. Since the publication of her short essay titled “Somebody's Father” in the *Independent* on February 27, 1851, Stowe herself continued to contribute her essays to the periodical until 1862 when she broke with it.²¹ Given that both her essay “Somebody's Father” and the review on the panorama were published in the *Independent* in the same month, it is no exaggeration to say that Stowe must have read the latter, which was published in the same periodical in the same month that the former was published. It is also very likely that she read the similar reviews in other periodicals, read the panorama pamphlet that her brother or friends brought to her, or at least heard about it from them before she had the panoramic vision in February of 1851.

When looking into the review, it is not hard to imagine how the review inspired Stowe to experience the panoramic vision of Tom's death scene. The reviewer approves the panorama as "a work of art, and indeed of genius" by differentiating it from existing panoramas that have focused on the accurate representation of landscape: he says, "The drawing, the coloring, the perspective, the figures, the grouping, all are exceedingly well executed for a work of this description; and as the scenes are original inventions of the artist, they give more opportunity for the display of genius and skill than is afforded in panoramas which are mere copies of nature." The review writer also emphasizes the panorama's appeal to the general audience including children and adults: "We particularly commend the exhibition for the young; yet we confess that, while looking at it with our juniors, we were all children together." With regard to the panorama's fidelity to Bunyan's work, he claims that the panorama artists have captured "the great moral of the book," which he regards as "the meaning of the author," and have "transferred [it] to the canvas." The reviewer's praise reaches its climax when he explains how the moving panorama outdoes the original text at least in terms of its generic and artistic ability to simulate a real-life experience: "The sight of Apollyon is enough to give Bunyan himself the night-mare." If the *Panorama of Pilgrim's Progress* could cause the author of its original text, which Stowe admires as "the second only to the Bible," to have the ghastly vision of the scenes in his text unrolled before his eye in his dream, it is no surprise that it did the same to Stowe, that is, stimulated her to have a panoramic vision of the scenes that she later transferred into her novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

5. 2. “Not Learned to Take Enlarged Views”: Stowe’s Critique of the Mississippi Panorama in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

It is Stowe’s novel itself that provides more concrete evidence of showing her knowledge of the panorama and, more importantly, her position toward expansionist river panoramas. Despite the lack of studies on the panorama in Stowe’s novel, Michael A. Chaney has paid attention to Stowe’s treatment of the panoramic vision. In a two-page section “Coda” at the end of chapter 4 “Panoramic Bodies: From Banvard’s Mississippi to Brown’s Iron Collar” in his 2008 book titled *Fugitive Vision: Slave Image and Black Identity in Antebellum Narrative*, Chaney concludes the chapter by arguing that the “prescience” of William Wells Brown’s appropriation and “retooling” of the technology of the panorama “may find evidence in” Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (146). Focusing on the narrator’s comments on the Northern traveler’s romantic and ahistorical view of the South in the first two chapters of the novel, Chaney argues that Stowe presumes “a readerly gaze” analogous to the gaze of “the experienced tourist or panorama enthusiast” whose “panoramic imagination” or “fantasy” supports “an expansionist agenda” through its “panoramic, seemingly boundless or frameless presentation” of the South (147). According to Chaney, Stowe invokes this type of panoramic gaze throughout her novel, but revamps it through the narrator’s sarcastic tone that inserts the romanticized view within the ugly frame, which is, in Stowe’s term, “the shadow of *law* [slavery]” (Italics original 51).

Although Chaney correctly analyzes Stowe's refutation of the tourist's romanticized view on slavery, there are two problems with his interpretation. First, the tourist's view in the first two chapters of the novel is not necessarily a panoramic vision since there is no reference or allusion to the distinctive characteristics of the panorama or the panoramic perspective. In addition, while focusing on the Northern tourist's gaze that objectifies slavery into romantic spectacle, Chaney neglects to explore how Uncle Tom reacts to such an objectifying gaze that, as Chaney aptly points out, Stowe invokes throughout the novel. The purpose of Chaney's chapter on William Wells Brown is to foreground the subversive power of Brown's agency in appropriating the technology of the moving panorama and transforming it into an anti-slavery panorama that counters the expansionism and white supremacy in the Mississippi panorama. While hinting at the possibility of extending Brown's manipulation of the panorama to Stowe's critique of the panoramic vision, Chaney confines his discussion to the white male tourist's perspective without paying attention to that of Uncle Tom, whom Stowe champions as a hero in her novel.

In fact, Stowe associates the tourist's gaze in the first two chapters of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with the aesthetic convention of the picturesque rather than the moving panorama and saves her critique of the panorama for the later scenes that focus on Tom's point of view. It is no accident that Stowe, in her novel, criticizes the American picturesque and the Mississippi panorama: as the most popular visual conventions in nineteenth-century America, they in common mildly represent and aestheticize slavery and transform southern plantations and slaves into sightseeing objects for romantic

tourism. This commonality between them is not accidental, but rather due to their shared feature as socially constructed modes of seeing. In order to understand the real significance of Stowe's critical use of the picturesque and the panorama, it is necessary to first examine how the picturesque and the panorama prescribe her contemporaries to see, and define their relation with, the world in certain ways.

In *Technologies of the Picturesque* (2008), Ron Broglio explores the association between cartography and the picturesque convention of viewing and representing nature within the historical context of Britain's National Ordnance Survey in the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. Both the surveyor and the picturesque tourist have the same kind of eye that captures the land through the mediation of an optical tool—such as surveyors' theodolites and quadrants and picturesque artists' Claude glasses—as well as an equivalent “mental construct” that frames scenes; they also transform the framed scenes into ordered and abstract objects for “the viewing subjects” to possess (Broglio 57-58). Broglio also argues that cartography and picturesque tourism provided viewers with the same mode of seeing that is characterized by “lines of sight, station points for observation, framed scenes, and privileged elevations for viewing used by surveyors” (23).²²

Broglio's understanding of optical tools, whose mechanism “both derives from and help constitute a mental and physical ecology of cognition,” is influenced by Crary's study on the technology of optical devices and their significance for scientific, philosophical, and aesthetic discourses on vision and the observer's subjectivity in *Techniques of the Observer* (1990). As Broglio reveals, the picturesque mode of seeing

“accords with” Crary’s analysis of the camera obscura in terms of “the abstraction or removal of the viewer from the scene viewed” (23-24; 58). According to Crary, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the camera obscura was no longer one of many optical instruments or “visual options,” but instead “the compulsory site from which vision can be conceived or represented” (38). Above all, it functioned as “paradigmatic” of the dominant status of the pre-nineteenth-century observer as the seeing subject whose hegemonic vision objectifies the world: the hegemony of “the subject-as-observer” is characterized by the individuated and decorporealized vision that separates and isolates the observer from an exterior world, disembodies him²³ into an autonomous metaphysical self, and securely positions and encloses him within the interior space of the mind.²⁴

Unlike the confined and framed vision in the picturesque and the camera obscura, the panorama allows the observer to have an illusion of unlimited view: e.g. the all-embracing view in the circular panorama and a simulation of real-life travel through a long stretch of landscape in the moving panorama. In spite of the difference of the panorama from the picturesque and the camera obscura in terms of the scope of vision, they provide the observer with the same kind of relation with the world. As in the picturesque and the camera obscura, the panorama assumes an autonomous and privileged vision from an elevated vantage point. The bird’s-eye point of view in the panorama also secures the separation and isolation of the observer from the scene viewed. In addition, as a nostalgic adaptation of the pre-camera obscura mode of a divine, omniscient, and decorporealized vision in the sixteenth century, the panorama

satisfies nineteenth-century observers' desire to extend their dominance over the world into an unlimited level.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe demonstrates her clear understanding of how her contemporaries knowingly or unknowingly have their view of slavery and the South preconditioned by socially constructed modes of seeing. Through her allusions to the picturesque and the Mississippi panorama, Stowe first allows her readers to identify with the Northern male tourist's objectifying gaze that turns slavery into romantic spectacle from his privileged status as a seeing subject who is securely separated from the cruel reality of slavery. Then, Stowe reveals that their romanticized views and attitudes towards slavery are socially learned behaviors that contribute to justify and aestheticize slavery. Also, by differentiating these objectifying and romanticizing gazes from more humanized and sympathetic views and attitudes towards slaves, Stowe induces the readers to dissociate themselves from the former and return to the latter, which she regards as innate human nature.

In the first two chapters of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe introduces to her readers two picturesque spectacles of the South through the Northern male tourist's romanticized view: Mr. Shelby's plantation and Eliza, a "mulatto" slave woman. In chapter 1 "In which the Reader Is Introduced to a Man of Humanity," Stowe first seems to follow the conventions of mildly representing slavery and supporting the supremacy of white patriarchy in the American picturesque as well as the Mississippi panorama.²⁵ She presents Mr. Shelby's plantation as "the mildest form of the system of slavery" and emphasizes the "good-humored indulgence" of Mr. Shelby who, as a patriarch of slaves

in the plantation, receives their “affectionate loyalty” (50). However, Stowe soon reveals that such a plantation owned by the “kindest” master is nothing but “the oft-fabled *poetic legend*” that “[w]hoever visits” there “might be tempted to *dream*” (Italics mine 50-51). Demystifying the fantasy about mild slavery as “a patriarchal institution,” Stowe guides her readers to renounce such a romanticized view of slavery and recognize “a portentous shadow—the shadow of *law* [slavery]” that “broods over and above” the scene (Italics original 51). “So long as the law considers all these human beings [slaves], only as so many *things* belonging to a master,” Stowe asserts, “it is impossible to make anything beautiful or desirable in the best regulated administration of slavery” (Italics original 51).

In the second chapter of her novel, Stowe presents the Northern male tourist’s picturesque mode of seeing that turns Eliza into an object to be seen and possessed. Just as she does in the previous chapter, Stowe first pretends to invite her readers to follow the picturesque convention of objectifying a slave woman into a spectacle. The beginning of chapter 2 reads:

Eliza had been brought up by her mistress, from girlhood, as a petted and indulged favorite. The traveller in the south must often have remarked that peculiar air of refinement, that softness of voice and manner, which seems in many cases to be a particular gift to the quadroon and mulatto women. These natural graces in the quadroon are often united with beauty of the most dazzling kind, and in almost every case with a personal appearance prepossessing and agreeable. (54)

Depending on the authority of the eyewitness, Stowe easily entices her readers to accept as truth the traveller's comments on quadroon and mulatto women in the south. The readers are also invited to gaze at Eliza through the traveller's viewpoint and envision her image by superimposing on her the feminine beauties that the traveller regards as a natural gift to quadroon slave women like Eliza.

However, the author disillusiones the readers from their imagination of Eliza through the traveller's "fancy sketch" by reminding them of the description of Eliza in the previous chapter in which she appears in the novel for the first time. Stowe writes, "Eliza, such as we have described her, is not a fancy sketch, but taken from remembrance, as we saw her, years ago, in Kentucky" (54). This also reminds the readers of the slave buyer's rapacious gaze on Eliza, which follows her first appearance. Just as the traveller does on mulatto women, Mr. Haley's gaze "fixed on" Eliza, scrutinizes her feminine beauties, and perceives Eliza as a fine article for his business: "Her dress was of the neatest possible fit, and set off to advantage her finely moulded shape;—a delicately formed hand and a trim foot and ankle were items of appearance that did not escape the quick eye of the trader, well used to run up at a glance that points of a fine female article" (45). Stowe associates the slave trader's "bold and undisguised" gaze with the traveller's gaze, which hides its latent desire to objectify and possess slave women under the mask of his scientific interest as an ethnographical investigator and explorer.

Readers also realize that their identification with the objectifying male gaze turns them into the "temptations which make beauty so fatal an inheritance to a slave" like

Eliza who is now vulnerable to any male gaze since Mrs. Shelby's "protecting care," which has prevented Eliza from being vulnerable to such scrutiny, does not work any longer (54). As Stowe explains between the two scenes—the first on the slave buyer's gaze on her and the second on the traveler's gaze on mulatto women— "the failure, or misfortune, or imprudence [. . .] of the kindest owner may cause [slaves] any day to exchange a life of kind protection and indulgence for one of hopeless misery and toil"; now, Eliza is in the same situation because Mr. Shelby "speculated largely and quite loosely; had involved himself deeply, and his notes to a large amount had come into the hands of Haley" (51).

After presenting in the first two chapters of the novel her critique of the picturesque convention, which had been accepted as a major aesthetic and epistemological convention since the late eighteenth century, Stowe moves on to invoke and criticize the panorama, whose construction as a social convention of seeing is ongoing in Stowe's day. This sequence indicates Stowe's recognition of the connection between the two as well as her intention to effectively debunk how contemporary readers sympathize with, or tacitly approve, slavery through their identification with the tourist/artist's gaze in the picturesque and the Mississippi panorama.

In Chapter 14 titled "Evangeline," Stowe first invokes the convention of the Mississippi panorama that praises the river as a romantic symbol of the nation's vastness and greatness and propagandizes white supremacy in the nation's progress. Calling the Mississippi the "river of dreams and wild romance," Stowe emphasizes that the

greatness of the river is commensurate with that of the nation in terms of her natural wealth as well as agricultural and industrial development. Stowe exclaims:

What other river of the world bears on its bosom to the ocean the wealth and enterprise of such another country?—a country whose products embrace all between the tropics and the poles! Those turbid waters, hurrying, foaming, tearing along, an apt resemblance of that headlong tide of business which is poured along its wave by a race more vehement and energetic than any the old world ever saw. (226)

The race that pours along the wave of the Mississippi “that headlong tide of business” is European Americans who are “more vehement and energetic” than any other Europeans in “the old world.” They are those who make possible the magical change of the Mississippi river, which Stowe mentions at the beginning of the chapter: “The Mississippi! How, as by an enchanted wand, have its scenes been changed, [. . .] as a river of mighty, unbroken solitudes, rolling amid undreamed wonders of vegetable and animal existence” (226).

Stowe soon revokes her pretension to follow the convention of the Mississippi panorama, however, by pointing out that one of many different kinds of business that white Americans run along the river is the slave trade. Stowe deplores, “Ah! Would that they [those turbid waters] also bear along a more fearful freight,—the tears of the oppressed, the sighs of the helpless, the bitter prayers of poor, ignorant hearts to an unknown God” (226-27). Now dissociated partly from the romanticizing mode of seeing in the convention of the Mississippi panorama, the authorial gaze and, by extension, the

readerly gaze zoom in toward one of the steamboats on the river and find on her upper deck “our humble friend Tom” who is now an “article” in the slave trade placed among other kinds of products such as cotton-bales that are transported to “the nearing mart” (227).

Once the author finds Tom on the steamboat, she returns to her earlier attempt to invoke the convention of the Mississippi panorama by associating Tom with the panorama tourist of the Mississippi river. Stowe explains how Tom wins the confidence of even the coarse and cynical slave trader Mr. Haley, gradually gaining permission to move freely on the boat and to “sleep at night unfettered” (227). The place in which Tom rests himself when there is nothing for him to do is “a nook among the cotton-bales of the upper deck” (227-28). Stowe then explicates how the high water level of the Mississippi river allows the steamboat traveler to have a vantage viewpoint: “For a hundred or more miles above New Orleans, the river is higher than the surrounding country, and rolls its tremendous volume between massive levees twenty feet in height” (228). The author also compares the traveler’s view from the open deck, which is usually reserved only for the first-class passengers, to that “from some floating castle top” (228). All these explanations about the high water level and the elevated view from the open deck are devised to successfully consolidate Tom’s vantage point. Tom’s viewpoint from the upper deck is higher than that of the panorama tourist who, from the open deck, “overlooks the whole country for miles and miles around” (228).

After endowing Tom with an elevated point of view, Stowe moves on to associate Tom with the panorama painter. Stowe depicts Tom as an active observer with

agency to control the viewed scenes rather than a passive recipient of them. Tom “spread[s] out full before him, in plantation after plantation, a map of the life to which he was approaching,” just as the panorama artist spreads out a long stretch of canvas and re-creates the panoramic view of the Mississippi river on it (228). Stowe continues to enlist the objects that Tom spots in the landscape of the Mississippi river.

He saw the distant slaves at their toil; he saw afar their villages of huts gleaming out in long rows on many a plantation, distant from the stately mansions and pleasure-grounds of the master;—and as *the moving picture* passed on, his poor, foolish heart would be turning backward to the Kentucky farm, with its old shadowy beeches,—to the master’s house, with its wide, cool halls, and, near by, the little cabin overgrown with the multiflora and bignonia. There he seemed to see familiar faces of comrades who had grown up with him from infancy; he saw his busy wife, bustling in her preparations for his evening meals; he heard the merry laugh of his boys at their play, and the chirrup of the baby at his knee; and then, with a start, all faded, and he saw again the canebrakes and cypresses and gliding plantations, and heard again the *creaking and groaning of the machinery*, all telling him too plainly that all that phase of life had gone by forever. (Italics mine 228)

As in Banvard’s panorama pamphlet, the distant gaze of Tom as a pseudo-panorama tourist is supposed to objectify these items including slave workers in fields, slave huts, and the master’s mansions and pleasure-grounds. As soon as Stowe makes a direct

reference to the moving panorama by comparing these scenes to “the moving picture” that passes on before Tom’s eye—the moving panorama was also called the moving picture in Stowe’s day—, however, she suddenly rejects the analogy between Tom and the panorama artist. Despite his possession of a vantage viewpoint, Tom cannot view the landscape of slavery through the tourist’s objectifying gaze in the convention of the Mississippi panorama since Tom’s “poor, foolish heart” causes him to sympathize with each of the items in the scenery. Renouncing the panoramic mode of seeing, Tom’s mind’s eye turns backward to Mr. Shelby’s plantation and provides him with a close view of his comrades, wife, and children as well as the scenes from his past life with them. Awakening from his daydream, Tom finds himself seeing again the panoramic scenes of the Mississippi river, which now only tell him that his good old days are gone. Through Tom’s disenchantment, Stowe also prompts her readers to be disillusioned from the “dreams and wild romance” that she has associated with the river at the beginning of the chapter “Evangeline” by following the convention of the Mississippi panorama.

In chapter 12, “Select Incident of Lawful Trade,” Stowe uses Tom’s sympathetic vision, which refuses the tourist’s panoramic perspective, as a way to break through her readers’ numbed sensibility that has gotten used to atrocities in slavery. Depicting a scene of slave trading in which Lucy’s baby is taken away from her, Stowe deplores the common apathetic responses to the “told[-]too[-]oft” story of slavery from contemporary Northerners and even skeptically complains that the slave tale “needs not be told . . . in the ear of One who is not deaf” (202). Rather than telling another over-worn slave story by following the conventional mode of representing slavery recurrent in slave narratives

and the abolitionist press, Stowe shows the scene of a slave trade to her readers through a new perspective or, in Stowe's own term in her 1850 religious pamphlet, "new eyes," which are Tom's (qtd. in Hochman 163). Tom is the only one at the scene who "ha[s] a perfect understanding of its results" on Lucy because he "ha[s] *not learned to generalize, and to take enlarged views*" (Italics mine 209). Stowe's word choices "learned," "generalize," and "take enlarged views" suggest an understanding of the panorama as a socially constructed behavior. Derived from the convention of the Mississippi panorama, the panoramic mode of seeing objectifies nature and other people and securely separates the viewing subjects (white Northerners) from the objects viewed (slaves in the slave trade); at the same time, however, it isolates and encloses the observers into their privileged viewpoint and prevents them from understanding and sympathizing with others. Accustomed to the panoramic mode of seeing and justified by the "American state law," all the people in the scene, except Tom, regard the slave woman Lucy as a "*thing*" and "coolly classes [her] with the bundles, and bales, and boxes, among which she is lying" (Italics original 210). However, their objectifying gazes that turn Lucy into an object also turn them into the cold-blooded who participate in, or connive with, the evil of human trafficking. It is Tom's sympathetic eye alone that not only sees through the unbearable suffering that Lucy feels, which is invisible to others, but also makes "[h]is very soul ble[e]d within him" (210).

The significance of Tom's eyes is emphasized again later in the novel when Tom reads the Bible to St. Clare after Eva's death. St. Clare says to Tom, "I wish I had your eyes" since what Tom reads in the Bible is "all real to [him]" (437). With Tom's eyes

which “can jest fairly see” what is written in the Bible, Stowe sought to do for her readers what the *Panorama of Pilgrim’s Progress* did for its spectators, that is, allow them to actually see what they read in Bunyan’s book, as the aforementioned 1850 *Independent* review remarks, by successfully “transferr[ing] to the canvas the great moral of the book.” Stowe may have wanted her readers to read her novel as the panorama of slavery through Tom’s new eyes rather than with the benumbed eyes that they learned to have from the conventions of the picturesque and the Mississippi panorama.

5. 3. The Encounter between *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and the Moving Panorama in Tom Plays and Anti-Slavery Panoramas

When it was published in 1852, the popularity of Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was literally unprecedented. Selling 5,000 copies in two days, 300,000 copies within a year, and over one million copies by 1854 in the United States, the book eventually became the best-selling novel and the second-best selling book, after the Bible, of the nineteenth century.²⁶ Due to its phenomenal success, Stowe’s novel rapidly developed into one of the most popular and influential cultural texts of her day, engendering a number of incarnations through a variety of media and genres including dramatic adaptations, parody novels, paintings, card games, teaspoons, and dolls.²⁷ Though encompassed by the concept of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a cultural text, these variations and derivatives were heterogeneous in terms of their political positions toward slavery,

beyond the control of Stowe as the author of the original novel. For example, not a few parody novels—including William Gilmore Simms's *The Sword and the Distaff* (1852), Mary Henderson Eastman's *Aunt Phillis's Cabin; or, Southern Life As It Is* (1852), Robert Criswell's "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*" *Contrasted with Buckingham Hall, the Planter's Home* (1852), W. L. G. Smith's *Life at the South; or, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" As It Is* (1852), Philip J. Cozans's *Little Eva: The Flower of the South* (1853), and Caroline Lee Hentz *The Planter's Northern Bride* (1854)—were written to rebut Stowe's novel and established the subgenre, anti-Tom literature.

Tom shows, another subgenre derived from Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, were stage plays and musicals based on the novel, whose popularity reached its peak in the 1850s and continued until the early 1900s. Never authorized by Stowe, the dramatizations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the 1850s varied greatly in their politics. While George L. Aiken faithfully reproduced major scenes from the original novel and preserved Stowe's antislavery theme, others normalized Stowe's novel by reducing and softening abolitionist statements or even acceding to pro-slavery sentiment. The Aiken version kept characters and dialogue unchanged and retained Stowe's critique of Northerners' prejudice against slaves and their romanticized view of slavery.²⁸ In contrast, Henry J. Conway's stage adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was the most competitive rival for the Aiken version and also known as the "compromise" Tom play, alleviated or removed what he called "the many crude points" and "objectionable features" from Stowe's novel, increased the comic roles, and decreased the female ones (Gossett 274-76).²⁹ The minstrel shows based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* often explicitly

defended slavery by depicting slaves as happy and carefree and denying and ridiculing human feelings between lovers and between family members among blacks: for example, in one act of their 1853 minstrel show, Christy and Wood parodied the Aiken version and entitled the act “Life among the Happy” (Gossett 276-77).

The moving panorama was another antebellum cultural artifact that had a significant role in the development of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a cultural text. Flourishing in the 1850s and continuing through the 1880s, the interactions of the moving panorama with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* took place through two venues: theatrical plays and the anti-slavery movement. More than six stage versions of Stowe's novel used a specific subgenre of the moving panorama, the panorama of the Mississippi River, as a theatrical backdrop. The correspondence between the Mississippi panorama and the Tom plays was based on their common romanticized attitudes toward slavery. Incorporating the portions of the Mississippi panorama, which favorably represent slavery and transform slaves and the South into objects for romantic tourism, these Tom plays used them as a means to effectively alleviate or eradicate abolitionist and feminist themes of the novel and water down its radical sentiments and challenges to the dominant culture. In contrast, white abolitionist painters created non-theatrical moving panoramas based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in order to propagandize the anti-slavery theme in the novel and raise funds to aid fugitive slaves and support abolitionist movements.

Several studies already have paid attention to the use of the moving panorama in some dramatizations of the novel. However, they tend to focus on the rivalry between P. T. Barnum's American Museum and Captain Alexander Purdy's National Theatre,

keeping silent on, or ignoring, the use of the moving panorama in other earlier or later Tom plays.³⁰ The most common misunderstanding that one can have from these previous studies is that Barnum was the first to use the moving panorama in the stage versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. For example, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin as Visual Culture* (2007), Jo-Ann Morgan asserts, "At Barnum's American Museum, the script was simplified, but the visual aspect was embellished to include especially sumptuous scenery. 'A grand panorama by C. Lehr' was an added draw for audiences" (53). However, it was not Lehr's that Barnum added in his dramatization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. After acquiring Conway's stage adaptation of the novel, Barnum incorporated a grand panorama of the Mississippi created by a painter named Delamere and reopened it on November 7, 1853 in his American Museum in New York. Almost one year before, the original Conway version, which was opened at the Boston Museum on 15 November 15 1852, had already used a Mississippi panorama painted by "C. Lehr."

One of the best candidates for "C. Leher" is Charles Lehr, a panorama artist and scene painter active in New York City and Cincinnati, Ohio in 1830s and in Philadelphia in 1840s through the early 1850s.³¹ In November 1850, William F. Cogswell commissioned Lehr and a figure painter Jacob A. Dallas³² to paint a moving panorama titled *Cogswell's Panorama of Life in California and on the Isthmus* or *Panorama of the Gold Rush and Panama*, which was exhibited at the Minerva Rooms in New York in early 1851.³³ Although Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn's entry for Lehr in *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840-1865* (2000) does not provide any information on Lehr after his work for Cogswell's panorama, it is

very likely that the Mississippi panorama for Conway's play was one of the first works that Lehr painted after early 1850 when he had completed Cogswell's panorama in the following years.

According to three playbills for Conway's play dated on November 23 in 1852, December 13 in 1852, and April 10 and 11 in 1854, Lehr's moving panorama titled "GRAND PANORAMA OF A PORTION OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER down to New Orleans" was presented in the steamboat scene of act 2 [Figure 2-7].³⁴ This scene comes from chapter 14 "Evangeline" in the original novel, which, as I discuss in the previous section of this chapter, includes Stowe's reference to the Mississippi panorama.

Although Stowe in this scene first invokes but eventually rebukes Tom's panoramic vision from the upper deck of the steamboat toward the landscape of the Mississippi river, Conway's play incorporates Lehr's panorama to reinforce Conway's revision that reduces abolitionist sentiment and sympathizes with slavery. The description of scene 3 and scene 4, to which Lehr's panorama accompanied, in these three playbills commonly reads: "Scene 3[r]d—Deck of the Steamer. Song and Chorus—Hurrah! Hurrah! More Wood up Boys, Ho! ho! ho! Then for Orleans straight we put Boys, Ho! ho! ho! &c—[. . .] SCENE 4—The CABIN. [. . .] The contented Slave. The happy child" [Figure 2-7].

The cheerful mood and jolly laughs in the second scene echo with the previous scene which renders a serious theme, the dehumanization of slaves, ludicrous by ridiculing the difference between two different kinds of living freight, slaves and animals. In addition, the depiction of "contented" and "happy" slaves in the fourth scene must have stood out more prominently against the backdrop of Lehr's Mississippi panorama whose genre



Figure 2. Playbill for H. J. Conway's Dramatic Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Boston Museum on 23 November 1852. "Bills & Playbills, 1852-1927." *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*. Web. 5 Jan. 2010.



Figure 3. Playbill for H. J. Conway's Dramatic Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Boston Museum on 23 November 1852. "Bills & Playbills, 1852-1927." *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*. Web. 5 Jan. 2010. [Part]



Figure 4. Playbill for H. J. Conway's Dramatic Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Boston Museum on 13 December 1852. "Bills & Playbills, 1852-1927." *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*. Web. 5 Jan. 2010.

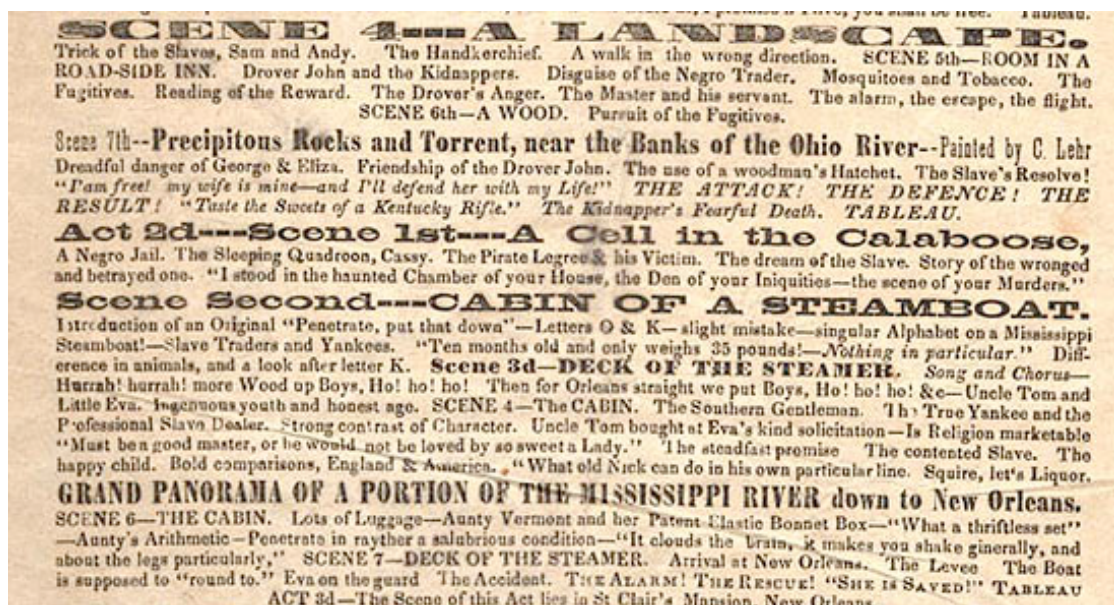


Figure 5. Playbill for H. J. Conway's Dramatic Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Boston Museum on 13 December 1852. "Bills & Playbills, 1852-1927." *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*. Web. 5 Jan. 2010. [Part]



Figure 6. Playbill for H. J. Conway's Dramatic Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Boston Museum on 10 and 11 April 1854. "Bills & Playbills, 1852-1927." *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*. Web. 5 Jan. 2010.

Act 1st—Scene 1st—VIEW OF THE HOUSE OF MR SHELBY
 and a part of his Plantation. UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.—Opening Chorus—"Early in de morning, by de break of day." The Mistress and Eliza. The Birth-day of Master George. Entrance of Uncle Tom. MOCK MINUET AND POLKA, Aunt Chloe and Sam. Negro Dance by the Characters. SCENE 2—APARTMENT IN SHELBY'S HOUSE.—The bargain for Tom and Eliza. The Slave husband and his bride. The contemplated escape. "Death in my arms before bondage to a stranger." SCENE 3—INTERIOR OF UNCLE TOM'S CABIN. The sale of Uncle Tom. News of Eliza's Flight. The rage of Haley. The dollar gift and promise—"as there's a Heaven above, and One who hears us, I promise if I live you shall be free." Tableau. SCENE 4th—A LANDSCAPE.—Trick of the Slaves Sam and Andy. The handkerchief. SCENE 5.—ROOM IN A ROADSIDE INN. Drover John and the kidnappers. Disguise of the Negro Trader. The Fugitives. Reading of the Reward. The alarm, the escape, the flight. SCENE 6th—A WOOD. Pursuit of the Fugitives.

SCENE 7th—Precipitous Rocks and Torrent near the Banks of the Ohio River—C. Lehr
 Dreadful Danger of George and Eliza. The use of a woodman's hatchet. The Slave's Resolve. "I am free, my wife is mine, and I'll defend her with my life." THE ATTACK. THE RESULT. The Kidnapper's Fearful Death! Tableau.

Act 2d. Scene 1st—A Cell in the Calaboose.
 The Pirate Legree and his victim. Story of the wronged and betrayed one. SCENE 2d—CABIN OF A STEAMBOAT. Introduction of an original "Penetrate put that down."—Letters O & K. Slight mistake. Singular Alphabet on a Mississippi Steamboat. Slave Traders and Yankees. SCENE 3. DECK OF THE STEAMER. SONG & CHORUS. "Hurrah, Hurrah, More Wood, Boys, Ho! Ho! Ho! &c." Uncle Tom and Little Eva. SCENE 4—THE CABIN.—The Southern Gentleman. Strong Contrast of Character. Uncle Tom bought at Eva's solicitation. "Squire let's Liquor."

GRAND PANORAMA !
 of a portion of the Mississippi River down to New Orleans. Aunty's Arithmetic. Penetrate in rather a salubrious condition. SCENE 7—DECK OF THE STEAMER. Arrival at New Orleans. The Levee. The Boat is supposed to "round to." The Accident. The Alarm. The Rescue. "SHE IS SAVED." TABLEAU.

ACT THIRD.—The Scene of this Act lies in St. Clare's Mansion, New Orleans. SCENE 1st—A SPLENDID APARTMENT. The Southern Lady and her various cares. Penetrate in a new place. The difference between meum and teum. "Such tricks in the North, would give him lodgings in Stone Jug." Song, Topsy "Jordin, is a hard road to trammel" Negro Breakdown—Topsy. "An Imp in general a young black—in particular." SCENE 2—CORRIDOR IN ST. CLARE'S MANSION. Little Eva with good news. The Letter from dear old home. Poor Uncle Tom's Prayer and hope. SCENE 3—KITCHEN OF ST. CLARE'S MANSION. The dark Cook and her culinary arrangements. The Quadroon Lady's Maid's Burlesque Pas de Trois. The Interruption. Queer places for strange things. SCENE 4—APARTMENT AT ST. CLARE'S. Penetrate's opinion of human nature generally and female human nature particularly. SCENE 5—AUNTY'S BED ROOM—Topsy in her glory. SCENE 6 FRONT HALL. Uncle Tom's remembrance of the precious dollar. SCENE 7—SALOON IN ST. CLARE'S HOUSE. Grief and desolation. **DEATH OF ST. CLARE. Apotheosis of his Mother. TABLEAU.**

ACT FOURTH. The Scene of this Act lies in New Orleans, and Legree's Plantation in the vicinity. SCENE 1. **SLAVE WAREHOUSE IN NEW ORLEANS** PLANTATION JIG.....E. GRAY
 The Slaves ready for the Sale. Penetrate in search of Poor Uncle Tom. Topsy and her dignity. SCENE 2—ROOM IN LEGREE'S HOUSE ON HIS PLANTATION. There may be hope, Heaven will not desert them wholly. SCENE THIRD—AUCTION ROOM. Bidding for the Slaves. "A Man! look at him, a Man!" Pity there was not more generally. The Argument! The Contradiction! The Fight!!! TABLEAU.

ACT FIFTH. In Orleans and on Legree's Plantation. SCENE 1—HOTEL IN NEW ORLEANS. Consultation between the husband and his spouse. Uncle Tom sold illegally. SCENE 2—ROOM AT LEGREE'S PLANTATION. The unwelcome intruder. The Haunted Room. The villain's terrible remorse and fear.

SCENE THIRD AND LAST
 Moonlight view of the Courtyard and a portion of the House of Simon Legree. Firmness of Uncle Tom. "You may whip me, starve me, burn me, it will only send me sooner where I long to go." The dollar and the fearful ringlet of hair. THE DREADFUL APPARITION. DEATH OF THE WRETCH LEGREE. UNCLE TOM'S FREEDOM. The happy end to a hard trial. "May your best wishes attend Poor Uncle Tom to his Cabin, although it be LIFE AMONG THE LOWLY."

Figure 7. Playbill for H. J. Conway's Dramatic Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Boston Museum on 10 and 11 April 1854. "Bills & Playbills, 1852-1927." *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*. Web. 5 Jan. 2010. [Part]

convention was to romanticize slavery and transform slaves into carefree and mindless objects.

Reviews in contemporary newspapers often valorize the artistic quality of Lehr's panorama. In an article titled "Boston Museum—'Uncle Tom's Cabin,'" reprinted from the *Boston Commonwealth* and published on 3 December 1852 in the *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, a reviewer extols the panorama as "the best of the very many similar works which have been on exhibition in this city."³⁵ Another review article that was published on the New Year's Day of 1853 in the *Boston Carpet Bag* not only speaks very highly of the panorama in Conway's play, but it also describes the panorama's romantic representation of the Mississippi river under the moonlight, which harmonizes with the romanticized and sympathetic attitudes toward slavery in Conway's adaptation: "There is much excellent scenery in the play, from the hand of Lehr, among which we may mention a moonlight scene upon the Mississippi, represented by a panorama, which surpasses anything we ever looked upon in its scenic effect. The gleaming of the moon upon the rippling waves is most admirably represented."³⁶

Unlike what Morgan asserts, neither Lehr's panorama in the Boston Museum nor Delamere's in the Barnum's American Museum in New York was "an added draw." In the Boston Museum, Lehr's panorama was an essential element of Conway's play. As the playbill on November 23 in 1852 indicates, the play incorporated the panorama from its launch in mid-November 1852 [Figure 2-3]. According to the playbill dated April 10 and 11 in 1854, even a revival of the Conway version used the same panorama for the same scenes [Figure 6-7]. Moreover, as shown in the playbill on February 25, 1853,

which was about three months after the first performance of the Conway version, the relationship between Lehr's panorama and Conway's play was reversed. In the "cameo appearance" of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at the benefit performance of another play titled *Old Job and Jacob Gray*, Conway's whole play was edited out, except Lehr's "Grand Panorama," which was identified as a "Panorama of a Portion of the Mississippi River down to New Orleans" in earlier playbills. Traditionally, for this kind of short cameo version, especially for a benefit performance to supplement the wages of those who worked backstage—in this case, for the Museum's master carpenter named J. A. Johnson—only the most eye-catching or representative part from the original play was chosen.³⁷ This proves how enthusiastic spectators' response to Lehr's panorama and how significant the role of the panorama was in the performance of the Conway version.

The success of Lehr's panorama in the original Conway version performed at the Boston Museum also refutes Morgan's assumption that Barnum included a new Mississippi panorama painted by Delamere in order to embellish and intensify the visual aspect as a part of his revision of Conway's play into his own version. Barnum purchased Conway's adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* from Moses Kimball who was the proprietor of the Boston Museum and Barnum's friend and show business collaborator. As John Frick points out, for more than a decade, Barnum and Kimball had been trading plays and shows that had been proved to be successful in each other's Museums: for example, the temperance classic, *The Drunkard*, was debuted at Kimball's Boston Museum in 1844 and later moved to Barnum's American Museum in New York in 1850 (Frick, par. 8). For some unknown reasons, Lehr's panorama was not included

in Barnum's purchase of Conway's play from Kimball, although there remains no information on its whereabouts before it reappeared in a revival of the Conway version at the Boston Museum in April 1854. Given the success and significance of Lehr's panorama in Conway's original version at the Boston Museum, it must have been inevitable, not simply as "an added draw," for Barnum to acquire and include a similar kind of Mississippi panorama in his revised version of Conway's play.

The emphasis on the rivalry between Barnum and Purdy in their use of the moving panorama originates from Harry Birdoff's 1947 book titled *The World's Greatest Hit: Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Without providing any information of the source, Birdoff presents dramatic, and possibly exaggerated, descriptions of Purdy's fervor for a Mississippi panorama by explicating how he hired a famous panorama painter, Charles Rogers, purchased the canvas "enough to rig out more than half of the Nation's navy," and ended up spending over \$2,000 in order to compete with his rival (102-103). However, Rogers's panorama was less significant in the rivalry than what Birdoff shows. Rogers's panorama launched on March 25, 1854, over 8 months after the first performance of the Aiken version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at Purdy's National Theatre in July 18, 1853. In addition, the package presentation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Rogers's panorama lasted less than three weeks until April 13, 1854, about one month before the last performance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at Purdy's National Theatre in May 12, 1854.³⁸ Such a short exhibition period for the package presentation of Aiken's Tom play and Rogers's Mississippi panorama counters the assumption that the rivalry between

museum proprietors caused the prevalent use of the panorama in different versions of the Tom play.

Aiken's dramatization of Stowe's novel was reopened at the National Theatre in Boston on the 19th of June in the same year. The exhibition of Aiken's play at the National Theatre in Boston did not use any panorama as a theatrical backdrop. In neither reviews and advertisements in Bostonian periodicals including the *Independent* and the *Spirit of the Times* nor Francis H. Underwood's recollection of his attendance at the Boston exhibition with Stowe, any evidence of using the Mississippi panorama can be found. This is very uncommon because panoramists and proprietors usually continued to exhibit their moving panoramas, whether theatrical or non-theatrical, until they made sufficient profit, or at least made ends meet.

The absence of the Mississippi panorama in any exhibition of the Aiken version before and after Purdy's unsuccessful short-term use of it were presumably because the pro-slavery theme of the Mississippi panorama was discordant with the anti-slavery sentiments in Aiken's Tom play. The Aiken version was one of few stage adaptations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that faithfully preserved the abolitionist theme and sentiments in Stowe's original novel. On the other hand, this also suggests the significance of the Mississippi panorama for other pro-slavery Tom plays as a means to reduce the anti-slavery messages in the original novel and reinforce their romanticized representation of slavery.

In the mid 1850s, at least two more pro-slavery dramatizations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* used the Mississippi panorama as theatrical backdrops. According to Alfred

Theodore Andreas's *History of Chicago: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (1884), as early as December 10, 1853, only about one month after Barnum's use of the panorama and over five months before Purdy's, R. D. Smith's Mississippi panorama was presented in an unidentified stage version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Chicago in December 1853 (492). Also, in spring 1854, Samuel W. Gulick, panorama painter active in Cleveland during the early 1850s, was at work on a Mississippi moving panorama for another unidentified stage production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. An entry on Gulick's panorama in *Annals of Cleveland, 1818-1935* records:

Apr. 7, 1854: 3/2—S. W. Gulick, artist, is engaged in painting a panorama of the Mississippi from Colonel Shelby's plantation on the Ohio to New Orleans. Sections of the panorama equal any of the 'Father of Waters.' The painting is intended to illustrate the drama of UNCLE TOM'S CABIN. It will be completed by May 1. (233).³⁹

The use of the Mississippi panorama in the pro-slavery Tom plays continued at least until 1870s. As an 1876 playbill for the Howard version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at the Boston Museum indicates, "a Magnificent New Panorama" of the Mississippi by Thomas B. Glessing was presented. According to an unsigned review in *The New York Tribune* on May 24, 1876, the same panorama was also used in the Howard version at the Park Theater. In addition, the Mississippi panorama was not the only expansionist panorama used for "Tom" shows. For example, a polar-sea moving panorama, which documented Elisha Kent Kane's 1855 expedition in the polar sea surrounding the North

Pole, was “one of the most popular and enduring panorama exhibitions playing alongside [‘Tom’ shows]” (Marling 28).

Another venue for the interactions of the moving panorama with *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was the anti-slavery movement. Before the publication of Stowe’s novel in 1852, there existed no anti-slavery moving panorama except two panoramas of slavery that were created by black abolitionists—Henry Box Brown’s *Mirror of Slavery* (1850) and William Wells Brown’s *Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave* (1850). Undoubtedly, the success of these two black abolitionist panoramas proved to the contemporary American public the potential of the panorama as abolitionist propaganda. However, it was Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* that prompted white abolitionists to create their own anti-slavery moving panorama.

Barton Stone Hays, anti-slavery artist active in Indiana, was arguably the first one that created a moving panorama based on Stowe’s novel. According to Mary Quick Burnet’s *Art and Artists of Indiana* (1921), as an “ardent abolitionist,” as soon as he read Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in its serial form released in the *National Era*, he “immediately” started working on a panorama that represented “the most vivid scenes of the story” (Burnet 72). The exhibition of Hays’s panorama was successful enough to encourage him to paint its second version.⁴⁰ In a report on the second version of Hays’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* panorama for the abolitionist newspaper, the *Liberator*, on August 5, 1853, an Indiana correspondent writes:

I write to you at present to ask you to notice, in the *Liberator*, the fact that, Mr. Hays, a talented Indiana anti-slavery artist, has been engaged

nearly a year in painting an extensive Panorama of Slavery, or an illustration of ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin.’ It will contain some fifty scenes—the characters as large as life. [. . .] Mr. Hays is an artist of decided merit, as numerous specimens of his art have shown. [. . .] Poverty and a natural diffidence have hitherto kept him in obscurity. He believes that in the prosecution of this work, he will not only aid his own resources, but do a work that will materially aid the cause of the slave. We think he deserves the encouragement of the friends of merit and genius, and especially of the friends of the slave. It is the intention of Mr. Hays to ship his work east, as soon as finished, and leave it to stand or fall before the most rigid criticism. (“Panorama of Slavery”)

As the article points out, if Hays really spent almost a year in creating the second version of his *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* panorama, it can be deduced that he started working on the second version around August 1852, one year before the date of the article’s publication. This also means that the exhibition of his first version launched right after the publication of Stowe’s novel on March 20, 1852 since it usually took at least several months for a successful panorama to make enough money to meet its production cost. In sum, for the first version, Hays must have literally transferred major scenes from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* into his panorama painting on a weekly basis, following his reading of one or two episodes serialized each week in the *National Era*. This assumption is also supported by the *Liberator* correspondent’s comment on Hays’s “poverty” that should have prevented him from hiring assistant painters to decrease the length of time to

complete the first version as well as the second version. Also, it is very probable that the first version was successful just enough to encourage him to, as indicated in the *Liberator* article, expect to earn from the second version sufficient money to aid not only “his own resources” but also “the cause of the slave.”

Marcus Mote, Quaker artist in Richmond, also painted two moving panoramas titled *Panorama of Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. In a local newspaper, the *Western Star* of Lebanon, Ohio, an article was published on April 1, 1853 to preliminarily announce the exhibition of Mote’s panorama from May 9th. According to this article, the first version of Mote’s Uncle Tom panorama was “executed in superior style” to “correctly portray the scenes” in Stowe’s novel (qtd. in Thornburg 23). After a two-day exhibition in the Court House in Lebanon, the panorama was moved to Waynesville, ten miles away from Lebanon, and exhibited in the Convert Hall (Thornburg 23-24). The first exhibition of Mote’s panorama at Waynesville, Ohio was reviewed in an article on May 11 in a local weekly newspaper, the *Miami Visitor*. Exalting the panorama as “certainly one of the very best paintings of the panorama school in existence,” the article records that the panorama had twenty scenes among which three scenes titled “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” “Death of Eva,” and “slave Warehouse at New Orleans” were particularly excellent in their “vivid and lifelike representations” (qtd. in Thornburg 24). The reviewer also extols the “splendidly beautiful” scene of “Death of Eva” as “the masterpiece” that “alone is worth the price of admission” and details on the audience’s “breathless silence and earnest, absorbed gaze” toward the scene (qtd. in Thornburg 24).

Four years later, the same local newspaper, the *Miami Visitor*, published an article on the second version of Mote's panorama. Titled "Panorama of Uncle Tom's Cabin" and dated on 27 May 1857, the article announces:

This work, which is highly spoken of by our exchanges and the press through the country as being a superior painting, will be here on this Monday and tomorrow evenings, at Concert Hall. The work is painted in *oil*, which gives it a finish not to be obtained in cheaper colors, and contains *forty-seven scenes*, with figures full life size. This is not the same Panorama that was here before, of Uncle Tom, but is said to be a better one.

As indicated in the article, before its arrival at Waynesville in May 1857, Mote's second version had already travelled around the country and received high praises for its artistic superiority, which proves that anti-slavery panoramas based on Stowe's novel continued to be popular until the late 1850s. The reviewer also emphasizes the greatness of the second version by differentiating it from the first one, which is identified as "the same Panorama that was here before, of Uncle Tom," focusing on oil paint, full life-size figures, and the number of scenes that is increased by more than twice from the first version. Another review article published in the same newspaper one week later on 3 June 1857 hails the panorama as "one of the very best that is now traveling" by pointing out its two more strengths. First, the figures were "more life-like and perfect than in almost any other work of the kind to be found"; also, the length and width of the

panorama was “sufficient[ly]” increased to “give the beholder a clear idea of the representations on the canvass” (“The Panorama”).

In June 1853, a few weeks after the exhibition of Mote’s first panorama of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* at Waynesville, a Cincinnati landscape and panorama painter, John L. Leslie, finished his own panorama of the same title, which he had worked on from the autumn in 1852.⁴¹ Although detailed information is lacking, two other panoramas of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* existed in 1850s. As advertised in the *Detroit Free Press*, the Panorama of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* created by a painter named Foster was exhibited in Detroit in July and August 1853.⁴² Its subtitle “Enlarged and Improved: embracing 1,000 HUMAN FIGURES” implies the existence of the former version.⁴³ Also, a review in *Cleveland Daily True Democrat* in September 1855 records an exhibition of Luden and Brown’s panorama of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* at a church in Cleveland.⁴⁴

The panorama of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* continued to be exhibited until the 1880s. For example, as an advertisement for Sunday’s performance in Harry Hill’s Variety Theatre in New York on March 14, 1880, announced, the panorama of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was exhibited after the performance of a small continent of the Salvation Army from Britain.⁴⁵

The *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* panorama was also popular in other countries. As a local newspaper reported, a moving panorama titled the *Panorama of Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, with a lecturer named Mr. E. Woods was presented in Preston, England for two weeks in November-December 1852.⁴⁶ According to the *Preston Chronicle and Lancashire Advertiser*, “audience have been large, owing chiefly to the attendance of

scholars from Sunday and day schools, who testified their approbation of the exhibition by loud plaudits” (Ruggles 147). According to the *Illustrated Sydney News*, a “3000 foot” panorama of fifty scenes titled *The Grand Moving Panorama of Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, with an accompanying blackface minstrel show, was shown in the saloon of the Royal Hotel in Sydney, Australia, in February and March, 1854 and reopened at the Protestant hall, Melbourne, in May (Callaway 144, 200).⁴⁷ During the exhibition, the performance of actors at the foreground was added to “present scenes ‘descriptive of the horrors of slavery’” (Callaway 144).

5. 4. Coda: The Panorama and Female Subjectivity

One day in Boston in 1854, renouncing her earlier unconditional objection to any kind of plays including “respectable and moral” ones, Stowe, for the first time in her life, attended the performance of a play, which was the Aiken-Howard version shown at the National Theatre in Boston.⁴⁸ She accompanied Francis H. Underwood, who later helped to found the *Atlantic Monthly*.⁴⁹ About the evening, he recalls:

I asked Mrs. Stowe to go with me to see the play. She had some natural reluctance, considering the position her father had taken against the theatre, and considering the position of her husband as a preacher; but she also had some curiosity as a woman and as an author to see in flesh and blood the creations of her imagination. I think she told me she had never been in a theatre in her life. I procured the manager’s box, and we entered

privately, she being well muffled. She sat in the shade of the curtains of our box, and watched the play attentively. I never saw such delight upon a human face as she displayed. [. . .] She scarcely spoke during the evening; but her expression was eloquent—smiles and tears succeeding each other through the whole. (75)

Unfortunately, in his account, Underwood does not mention whether the Mississippi panorama was used in the performance or not. However, Underwood's understanding of Stowe's two personas—"as a woman" and "as an author"—as a possible motivation for her changed attitude toward the play predicts her use of the panoramic vision as a symbol for her female character's subjectivity in her 1859 novel, *The Minister's Wooing*.

Breaking her silence on the panorama except some allusions examined earlier in this paper, Stowe uses the word "panorama" in chapter 17 titled "Polemics in the Kitchen" in which she describes Mrs. Marvyn's room with a panoramic view. In this chapter, the novel's heroine Mary Scudder, the object of the minister Samuel Hopkins's wooing, visits Mrs. Marvyn, the mother of her lost love, James, who is believed to be dead in a shipwreck, but finally returns to Mary later in the novel. The scene, which includes a reference to the moving panorama, reads:

The north room was a large chamber, overlooking a splendid reach of sea-prospect. A moving panorama of blue water and gliding sails was unrolled before its three windows, so that stepping into the room gave one an instant and breezy sense of expansion. Mrs. Marvyn was standing at the large wheel, spinning wool,—a reel and basket of spools on her side.

Her large brown eyes had an eager joy in them when Mary entered; but they seemed to calm down again, and she received her only with that placid, sincere air which was her habit. Everything about his woman showed an ardent soul, repressed by timidity and by a certain dumbness in the faculties of outward expression; but her eyes had, at times, that earnest, appealing language which is so pathetic in the silence of inferior animals.— One sometimes see such eyes, and wonders whether the story they intimate will ever be spoken in mortal language. (697)

Following the contemporary journalists' convention of using the word "panorama" to signify a real panoramic landscape spreading before the observer's physical eye, Stowe uses "a moving panorama" as a metaphor for the panoramic view seen from the room. At the same time, just as other antebellum literary writers did, Stowe also uses the moving panorama and the room as epistemological metaphors to denote the observer's mental states. The room is a symbol for the domesticated femininity of Mrs. Marvyn as an eighteenth-century woman who is supposed to confine herself within the domestic sphere and have nothing else to do but deplore the loss of her beloved son, "repress" her true feelings—e.g. the feeling of anger at God who she thinks has ordained her son's death— and turn the "spinning wool," which is an allusion to the wheel of fortune, that is, the capricious nature of fate. In addition, the "moving panorama" view seen through the windows and the imbued "sense of expansion" imply her "repressed" but "ardent" desire for female subjectivity through which she can express herself and expand her world by freeing herself from the confinement of domestic femininity.

In spite of the author's reference to the moving panorama, as the title of the first chapter "Pre-Railroad Times" indicates, the novel is set in New England in the eighteenth century when neither the railroad nor the panorama had been invented. Stowe uses the moving panorama, which is a socially constructed "way of seeing" in the mid-nineteenth century, to describe a New England seascape at least half a century before her time. This authorial gaze reveals Stowe's sympathy toward Mrs. Marvyn. As one of the female antebellum writers who were allowed to participate in, and increase their influential power in, the public sphere only through their writing, Stowe sympathizes with an eighteenth-century woman who can express herself only through the silent language of her eyes, which is "earnest" and "appealing," but still imprisoned in the "timidity" and "dumbness" of "the faculties of outward expression," that is, the domesticated femininity that she is forced to perform.

Considering that Stowe's in-depth understanding and skillful use of the panorama as a socially constructed metaphor and way of seeing in the above scene, it is hard to say that her avoidance of using the word "panorama" in her writing was caused by her indifference to the moving panorama fever in antebellum America. Rather, a reading of Stowe's novel as her critique of Calvinism and gender politics opens up a possibility of reading Mrs. Marvyn as the autobiographical reflection of Stowe. Mrs. Marvyn's yearning for the expression and expansion of her self, which is symbolized by the metaphor of the moving panorama vision, is repressed by the social regulations and prejudice against women as well as the pressures of Calvinist principles such as predestination, which can be manipulated to justify the myth that women's fate as an

inferior gender is predestined. Through her use of the panorama as a symbolic metaphor for her female character's vision and subjectivity, Stowe might have sought to free herself and other nineteenth-century women from the "conquest and colonization" of American masculinity, as Cynthia Griffin Wolff aptly points out, whose "internalized, systemized, and legally perpetuated enactment" was what would perpetuate the slave system ("‘Masculinity’ in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" 600).

Notes

1. See also Wolff, “‘Masculinity’ in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*” 596.

2. Ibid. See also O’Loughline 574.

3. Morgan 2; O’Loughlin 574-55.

4. See O’Loughline 575-76.

5. This chapter is revised and developed from my conference paper presented in the “Harriet Beecher Stowe and Visual Culture” session for American Literature Association (ALA) 21st annual conference on May 27, 2010.

6. I borrow the words “greatest hit” from Harry Birdoff’s *The World’s Greatest Hit: Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1947).

7. Asa Hutchinson was one of the Hutchinson family singers, the most popular music performers of mid-nineteenth-century America.

8. See Rineer 188.

9. Gossett 261.

10. As Avery explains in “Movies for Manifest Destiny,” “By rendering the scene in a combination of opaque and transparent pigments on both sides of the canvas, then lightning the image first from in front, then from behind, Daguerre conjured illusions of sunsets and oncoming storms, augmenting them, where appropriate, with sound effects” (3). See also Altick 200-201; Ruggles 69-70.

11. See Hardiman 13.

12. Ibid., 14. See also Avery’s *The Panorama and Its Manifestation* 237.

13. Hendrick 398; Gilbertson 309; Charles Edward Stowe 13-14.

14. See Hardiman 17.

15. Ibid. See also Avery's *The Panorama and Its Manifestation* 245-46.

16. Ibid., 13.

17. Hardiman 15.

18. Ibid.

19. See Avery, *The Panorama and Its Manifestation* 245, 265.

20. Ibid., 245.

21. In the year of 1851, Stowe published two more essays in the *Independent*, "The American Altar of 1850" on July 10 and "Miscellaneous: The Tea Rose" on June 26. As the *Independent* announced on May 20, 1852, from 1852, Stowe became a weekly contributor (Hendrick 227). As Hendrick indicates, Stowe "requested in 1862 that the editors withdraw her name from their list of contributors" (317).

22. According to Broglio, just as the Claude glass "foreshortens the foreground in order to emphasize the central objects of the middle ground," the theodolite has "a narrow focus, which precludes observation of a foreground" (58).

23. Concerning my use of a male pronoun "him," see note 16 in chapter 1.

24. Crary 8; 38-39; 45; 70.

25. Concerning how the Mississippi panorama and the American picturesque support white supremacy and mildly representation slavery, see section 1 in chapter 4.

26. Parfait 67-68; McNeese 20; Hinks 691.

27. The *Uncle Tom's Cabin* playing cards were printed in 1852, the same year that the novel was published, by W. and S. B. Ives. According to the website of Paul Mellon's Personal Library at the University of Virginia, this game is similar to the modern card game "Go Fish" and it has "twenty playing cards, each with an image of a character or object from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*."

<<http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/mellon/slavery.html>>.

28. Gossett 262-64; McConachie 17.

29. See also Frick 8th paragraph.

30. See Morgan 53; Drummond and Moody 318; and Birdoff 86-87.

31. Palmquist and Kailbourn 363.

32. Right before working for Cogswell's panorama, Dallas assisted Kyle to create the *Panorama of Pilgrim's Progress* whose first exhibition opened in New York in mid-November 1850 and which earlier in this chapter I assume as a possible source for Stowe's panoramic vision of a tortured slave.

33. Palmquist and Kailbourn 179, 193, 363.

34. See "Bills & Playbills, 1852-1927" in the website *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture* <<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/onstage/bills/billshp.html>>.

35. See "Reviewing *Uncle Tom* Onstage" in the website *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture* <<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/onstage/revus/osre03at.html>>.

36. Ibid. This article was reprinted in the *Boston Mirror* on 12 August 1899.

37. See the comments on the playbill dated on February 25, 1853 in “Bills & Playbills, 1852-1927” in the website *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and American Culture* <<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/onstage/bills/tsbills26f.html>>.

38. See the advertisements in the *New York Times* in “Theatrical Notices” in the website *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and American Culture* <<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/onstage/revus/osno05at.html>>.

39. See also Haverstock 360.

40. See Burnet 72; Haverstock 391.

41. Haverstock 520; Arrington 247; Thornburg 25.

42. Walsh 133.

43. Ibid.

44. *Annals of Cleveland, 1818-1935*, 287.

45. See Taiz 73.

46. Ruggles 147.

47. See also Colligan 48.

48. The Aiken-Howard version was closed on 12 May, 1854 at the National Theatre in New York and reopened at the National Theatre in Boston on the 19th of June. See Drummond and Moody 317.

49. Underwood himself said, “In the winter of 1852 or 1853 a dramatic version of ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ was performed at the National Theatre, Boston—a fine, large theatre, in the wrong place—that is to say, in one of the worst districts of Boston” (75). But as contemporary periodicals such as the *Independent* on 22 June 1854 and the *Spirit*

of the Times on 24 June 1854 record, “The National Theatre opened on the 19th with ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin.’” It is probable that, as shown in his inability to specify the exact year—“1852 or 1853”—, Underwood’s memory is incorrect.

6. CONCLUSION: THE PANORAMA REVIVAL IN THE POSTBELLUM AMERICA AND TWAIN'S *ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN*

The American fervor for the panorama, after its peak from the late 1840s through the 1850s, rapidly faded during the Civil War decade.¹ Although the gradual decline of the panorama's popularity was worldwide by the 1860s,² the collapse of the moving panorama in America is especially noteworthy due to the drastic change of its social implications. As I have shown, in antebellum America, the Mississippi panorama appealed to the public as an emblem of the American landscape and masculinist expansionism and some American Renaissance writers such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman had participated in the construction of the panoramic vision as a socially prescribed way of seeing and representing the world. However, after the Civil War, the dominant American genres of the moving panorama such as Mississippi panoramas and other frontier panoramas—as well as the huge wide-angle paintings that depicted panoramic views of the American frontier— not only declined in popularity but also became subjects of ridicule by humorist lecturers. For example, the humorist Charles Farrar Browne, whose nom de plume was Artemus Ward, travelled and lectured with a caricature panorama of the frontier in which he parodied conventional Mississippi panoramas by Banvard, Smith, and Egan³ and lampooned panoramic style landscape paintings of western subjects by the Hudson River School artist Albert Bierstadt.⁴ The critique of the moving panorama by other antebellum writers including Hawthorne,

Melville, Fuller, and Stowe had been a premonition, if not a cause, of the downfall of antebellum America's moving panorama fever.

During the postbellum era, however, the popularity of the panorama was revived, reached its peak in the late 1870s and 1880s, and continued until the emergence of the cinema in the 1990s.⁵ The postbellum American panorama revival was closely related to the increased need to recover masculinity as part of the postwar project of reconstructing American identity. Among the late-nineteenth-century American writers who viewed the wild American landscape in the West as a place for the postbellum reconstruction or redefinition of American manhood and masculinity, Mark Twain was the one who was most familiar with the Mississippi river and the Mississippi panorama.⁶ Before starting his new career as a journalist and travel writer in the 1860s, he had worked as a steamboat pilot and knew the details of the river. To earn a steamboat pilot license in 1859, he had studied the total 2000 miles of the Mississippi for more than two years. He also reveals his detailed knowledge of the Mississippi panorama convention in *Life on the Mississippi* (1883). In chapter 59, a panoramist, who is waiting until the opening of his panoramic show in the fall season, boards the steamer at La Crosse and provides his fellow-passengers with the description of every part of the Mississippi as well as its history and legends (573-81).

Significantly, in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Twain uses his critique of the panoramic vision for his postbellum contestation of all the three antebellum American issues that I have examined in the context of their association with the panorama: Emersonian transcendental vision, masculinity, and anti-slavery. Twain



Figure 8. A Sketch of the Scene “The Rocky Mountains” in Ward’s Panorama. (Ward 175)

foregrounds and denounces two characteristics of the panoramic perspective—the observer’s visual or physical control over the world and the central, autonomous, and decorporealized position of the Cartesian subject/observer—through his satirical and critical depiction of two types of masculinity: the frontier raftsmen’s lower-class physical masculinity and Colonel Grangerford’s aristocratic and patriarchal masculinity. Also, the symbolic use of fog and opaque vision in Huck’s and Jim’s voyage on the Mississippi River can be read as Twain’s criticism of the antebellum desire for transparent vision and panoramic perspective, both of which Emerson appreciates in his notion of transcendental vision in *Nature*.

Twain’s recognition that an individual cannot be independent from social influence does not mean that Twain fell into pessimism regarding the possibility of the self and manhood, especially considering Huck’s decision to save Jim, which has been wrong to the antebellum southerners but later turned out to be right to Twain’s contemporaries. Rather, it alludes that Twain in *Huckleberry Finn* does not trust the self-reliance of Emersonian manhood any longer. Unlike Emerson’s self-reliant man, who is the center of the universe, Twain seeks to demonstrate that, as in Huck’s recognition, the existence of the Other who observes and influences the self, whether in a malevolent or benevolent way, is prerequisite for the self’s *raison d’être*.

However, it is not certain whether Twain suggests the relation between Huck and Jim as an alternative to Emersonian self-reliance and as a model for the post-war reconstruction of the nation and human relationship. Huck’s boyhood is too insufficient and imperfect to be an alternative to an ideal manliness. Also, unlike Box Brown’s and

Wells Brown's construction of black masculinity and black patriarchy in and through their anti-slavery moving panoramas, Jim in Twain's novel is neither an ideal model of anti-slavery black hero nor a father figure for Huck. In addition, while Stowe presents Tom's sympathetic and humanized vision as an alternative to the dominant social convention of the panoramic vision that romanticizes slavery and objectifies slaves, Twain demonstrates how Huck understands Jim's considerate caretaking and benevolent gaze as well as his concern about his wife and children as his "white[ness] inside."⁷ Twain is also satirical about Jim's blind belief in all kinds of mysticism.

More importantly, however, Twain's ambiguous position about Huck's boyhood and Jim's manhood reverberates with the symbolic implications of ambiguity and opacity in his novel. As I discuss in chapter 3, through their critique of the panoramic and masculine vision and the emphasis on opacity and ambiguity of the human mind and vision, Hawthorne and Melville repudiate the Transcendentalists' totalizing and absolutist idealism and reveal how the panorama satisfies and reinforces the desire for visual and physical control over the rapidly expanding world and the fantasy of access to truth. In the same way, in addition to his critique of the two types of masculinity in their association with the panoramic perspective, Twain's use of the symbolic imagery of fog and drift in Huck's and Jim's voyage can be read as his contestation of the antebellum American enthusiasm for Emersonian transparent and panoramic vision. For this reading, Alan Trachtenberg's comment about the significance of the imagery of drift and the connection between the visual and the verbal in *Huckleberry Finn* is notable. Trachtenberg asserts:

[A] vision and the verbal means of its realization and execution are virtually inseparable. Mark Twain saw the world the best he was able to, given his special verbal resources. . . . Mark Twain's work as a whole suggests that he seriously doubted the possibilities of personal freedom within a social setting. . . . The imagery of drift in this novel is invested with such longing perhaps because it represents a condition already lost and insubstantial the moment it is imagined. (355-56)

As Trachtenberg argues, the symbolic visual image of drift in the novel is inseparable from Twain's verbal representation of, and argument for, the impossibility of the individual's independence from and nonchalance about social custom and influence. The only thing Huck and Jim can do on their voyage in the dark in order to find the light from the town in the free state is "to look out sharp for the town, and not pass it without seeing it" (153).

Although Twain's position toward the postwar redefinition of manhood is ambiguous, the symbolic imagery of fog and drift in *Huckleberry Finn* can be read as Twain's warning against the revival of the "panoramic" and "tyrannous eye" that Emerson demands from the national poet in his essay "The Poet." For Twain, the poem that is written by the poet with the "tyrannous" and "panoramic" vision is just another form of romanticism, which, along with racism, David L. Smith defines as "an elaborate justification which the adult counterparts of Tom Sawyer use to facilitate their exploitation and abuse of other human beings" (368).

When we read Twain's novel against the backdrop of the American Renaissance writers' different positions toward the panorama—which satisfied and reinforced the antebellum desire for direct access to truth to justify social and political agendas such as American expansionism, the supremacy of white masculinity, and anti-slavery—it is possible to see what Twain seeks to demonstrate to the postbellum America public through the imagery of fog and drift as well as his critique of the panoramic and masculine vision. If Hawthorne and Melville tried to demystify the fantasy of the Emersonian transparent and panoramic vision, which privileges the Cartesian subject with the all-embracing dominance over, and self-reliant independence and nonchalant autonomy from, nature and society, Twain might warn against the revival of the antebellum fantasy through the panorama revival in postbellum America.

Notes

1. Moldenhauer 231.

2. Palmquist 61.

3. As Dahl points out, comic scenes in Ward's panorama often satirically allude to scenes in conventional works by "serious" panoramists such as Banvard, Smith, and Egan ("Artemus Ward" 482). For example, the scene "A Meeting with the Indians" is a parody of Egan's panorama, especially a scene in which the panoramist is attacked by enormous wolves. By distorting the perspective and adding a huge bear, the scene in Ward's panorama describes Ward, who is attacked by wild animals, as a giant who towers over the puny Rocky Mountains (Dahl, "Artemus Ward" 482-83).

4. As Ward indicates in *Artemus Ward's Panorama: As Exhibited at the Egyptian Hall* (1869), a pamphlet for his panorama, the scene titled "The Rocky Mountains" in his panorama is a parody of Bierstadt's painting of the Rocky Mountains. Ward says, "The view may recall to those who have seen it Mr. Bierstadt's celebrated picture" (175). See [Figure 8]. Satirizing Bierstadt's painting and the popularity of the Rock Mountains, Ward continues to say, "I take it for granted you have heard of these popular mountains. In America they are regarded as a great success, and we all love dearly to talk about them. It is a kind of weakness with use. I never knew but one American who hadn't something--sometime--to say about the Rocky Mountains--and he was a deaf and dumb man, who couldn't say anything but nothing" (179).

5. The commercial cinema launched in 1895; and 1914 was the point of transition into the period of classical Hollywood cinema. See Simon Popple and Joe Kember, 5, 22.

6. About the connection between Twain and the panorama, two studies, Curtis Dahl's "Mark Twain and the Moving Panoramas" (1961) and Thomas Ruys Smith's *Rivers of Dreams: Imagining the Mississippi before Mark Twain* (2007), are noteworthy. In "Mark Twain and the Moving Panoramas," Dahl argues that the popularity of the moving panoramas in Twain's days influenced not only the way Twain viewed the Mississippi river but also the contents of and stylistic effects in his literary works. After presenting three different types of the moving panorama—the panorama of the Mississippi, the Western and Gold Rush panorama, and the panorama of Europe and the Near East—, Dahl examines the parallel between each of these three and Twain's works in terms of their common contents: "a vivid and absolutely accurate delineation of the river" (22), local color, wrecks "like that of the Walter Scott in *Huckleberry Finn*" (23), a hidden gang and desperadoes like Tom Sawyer's robber band, and historical, anecdotal, satirical stories and legends connected with various points of the river, the West, or Europe. As for the common stylistic effects between the moving panorama and Twain's works, Dahl points out the humor, which is "exaggerative, anecdotal and oral," and the "colorful and spectacular dioramic effect" in its broad sense—such as the various effects of light on the river landscape including sunsets, sunrises, rainbows and lunar rainbow" (28) in *Huckleberry Finn*— and the picturesque and pictorial style. In *Rivers of Dreams: Imagining the Mississippi before Mark Twain*, Smith's main

argument is that the Mississippi river as the “American Nile” had already been a powerful symbol of America throughout the antebellum years even before Mark Twain “enthralled the world with his definitive representations of the antebellum Mississippi” (2). In Chapter 4: “Moving Panoramas: The ‘Useful Illusion’ of the Visual Mississippi,” Smith examines the way in which the moving panoramas of the Mississippi, as “a visual counterpoint to manifest destiny” (6), reflect the expansionism of nineteenth-century America.

7. Huck says, “I went to sleep, and Jim didn’t call me when it was my turn. He often done that. When I waked up, just at day-break, he was setting there with his head down betwixt his knees, moaning and mourning to himself. . . . He was thinking about his wife and his children, away up yonder, and he was low and homesick. . . He was a mighty good nigger” (210).

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